Social Change and Development in India

TEXTBOOK IN SOCIOLOGY FOR CLASS XII

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राष्ट्रीय शैक्षिक अनुसंधान और प्रशिक्षण परिषद्
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND TRAINING

Reprint 2026-27

12109 – Social Change and Development in India

Textbook in Sociology for Class XII

ISBN 81-7450-728-0

First Edition
April 2007 Vaisakha 1929

Reprinted
November 2007, December 2008
January 2010, January 2011
January 2012, May 2013
November 2013, December 2014
January 2016, February 2017
January 2018, November 2018
December 2018, August 2019
August 2021

Revised Edition
November 2022, Agrahayana 1944

Reprinted
March 2024, Chaitra 1946
December 2024 Pausha 1946
December 2025 Agrahayana 1947

PD 15T HK

© ***National Council of Educational Research and Training, 2007, 2022***

₹ 100.00

Printed on 80 GSM paper with NCERT watermark

Published at the Publication Division by the Secretary, National Council of Educational Research and Training, Sri Aurobindo Marg, New Delhi 110016 and printed at Jaina Offset Printers, A33/2, Sahibabad Industrial Area, Site-IV (U.P.)

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FOREWORD

The National Curriculum Framework (NCF), 2005, recommends that children's life at school must be linked to their life outside the school. This principle marks a departure from the legacy of bookish learning which continues to shape our system and causes a gap between the school, home and community. The syllabi and textbooks developed on the basis of NCF signify an attempt to implement this basic idea. They also attempt to discourage rote learning and the maintenance of sharp boundaries between different subject areas. We hope these measures will take us significantly further in the direction of a child-centred system of education outlined in the National Policy on Education (1986).

The success of this effort depends on the steps that school principals and teachers will take to encourage children to reflect on their own learning and to pursue imaginative activities and questions. We must recognise that, given space, time and freedom, children generate new knowledge by engaging with the information passed on to them by adults. Treating the prescribed textbook as the sole basis of examination is one of the key reasons why other resources and sites of learning are ignored. Inculcating creativity and initiative is possible if we perceive and treat children as participants in learning, not as receivers of a fixed body of knowledge.

These aims imply considerable change in school routines and mode of functioning. Flexibility in the daily time-table is as necessary as rigour in implementing the annual calendar so that the required number of teaching days are actually devoted to teaching. The methods used for teaching and evaluation will also determine how effective this textbook proves in making children's life at school a happy experience, rather than a source of stress or boredom. Syllabus designers have tried to address the problem of curricular burden by restructuring and reorienting knowledge at different stages with greater consideration for child psychology and the time available for teaching. The textbook attempts to enhance this endeavour by giving higher priority and space to opportunities for contemplation and wondering, discussion in small groups, and activities requiring hands-on experience.

The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) appreciates the hard work done by the textbook development committee responsible for this textbook. We wish to thank the *Chairperson* of the advisory group in Social Sciences, Professor Hari Vasudevan, and the *Chief Advisor* for this textbook, Professor Yogendra Singh, for guiding the work of this committee. Several teachers contributed to the development of this textbook; we are grateful to their principals for making this possible. We are indebted to the institutions and organisations which have generously permitted us to draw upon their resources, material and personnel. We are especially grateful to the members of

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the National Monitoring Committee, appointed by the Department of Secondary and Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development under the Chairpersonship of Professor Mrinal Miri and Professor G.P. Deshpande, for their valuable time and contribution. As an organisation committed to systemic reform and continuous improvement in the quality of its products, NCERT welcomes comments and suggestions which will enable us to undertake further revision and refinement.

Director
National Council of Educational
Research and Training

New Delhi
20 November 2006

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RATIONALISATION OF CONTENT IN THE TEXTBOOKS

In view of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is imperative to reduce content load on students. The National Education Policy 2020, also emphasises reducing the content load and providing opportunities for experiential learning with creative mindset. In this background, the NCERT has undertaken the exercise to rationalise the textbooks across all classes. Learning Outcomes already developed by the NCERT across classes have been taken into consideration in this exercise.

Contents of the textbooks have been rationalised in view of the following:

- Overlapping with similar content included in other subject areas in the same class
- Similar content included in the lower or higher class in the same subject
- Difficulty level
- Content, which is easily accessible to students without much interventions from teachers and can be learned by children through self-learning or peer-learning
- Content, which is irrelevant in the present context

This present edition, is a reformatted version after carrying out the changes given above.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The many debts incurred in meeting the challenge of producing this textbook under a very tight schedule are gratefully acknowledged. First of all, thanks to all the colleagues of the editorial team and members who took out time from their other commitments to devote their energies to this task.

Yogendra Singh, *Professor Emeritus*, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, and our *Chief Advisor*, was, as always, a pillar of support who gave us the confidence to proceed. He and Krishna Kumar, *Professor* and *Director*, NCERT, provided the *abhay hastha* that enabled and guided our collective efforts. Savita Sinha, *Professor* and *Head*, Department of Education in Social Sciences and Humanities, lent unstinting support. Shveta Uppal, *Chief Editor*, NCERT, not only facilitated our work but encouraged us to aim higher.

We are thankful to Seema Banerjee, *PGT*, Sociology, Laxman Public School, New Delhi; Dev N. Pathak, Bluebell International School, New Delhi; Nirmla Choudhary, *PGT*, Sociology, Nehru Adarsh Senior Secondary School, Delhi; and Kiran Sharma, *PGT*, Sociology, Government Boys Senior Secondary School, President Estate, New Delhi, for providing their feedback and inputs.

Special thanks are due to Shweta Rao, who took on the challenge of designing the book and made it possible to realise our efforts. Her contributions are visible on every page. The Council also acknowledges the support and contribution of Jesna Jayachandran, *Research Scholar* at the Centre for the Study of Social Systems, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

Our special thanks to Satish Saberwal, *Professor,* and N. Jayaram, *Professor,* and members of the Monitoring Committee from whose meticulous comments and suggestions we benefited enormously.

Finally, we are grateful to all the institutions and individuals who allowed us to use materials from their publications, each of which is acknowledged in the text. The NCERT is specially grateful to R.K. Laxman for allowing us to use his cartoons; Malavika Karlekar for the use of photographs from her book, *Visualising Indian Women* 1875–1947, published by Oxford University Press, New Delhi; Radha Kumar for letting us use visuals from her book, *The History of Doing: An Illustrated Account of Movements for Women's Rights and Feminism in India 1800–1990; and* Ravi Agarwal for his collection of photographs. We have also used some material and photographs from *India Today*, *Outlook* and *Frontline*, *The Times of India*, *The Hindu* and *Hindustan Times*. The Council thanks the authors, copyright holders and publishers of these materials. The NCERT gratefully acknowledges the library of the Rail Museum, Chanakya Puri, New Delhi; Y.K. Gupta and R.C. Das of the Central Institute of Educational Technology, NCERT, New Delhi.

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The Council acknowledges the contribution of Nazia Khan, *DTP Operator*, Dinesh Kumar, *In-charge*, Computer Station, and Rishi Pal Singh, *Senior Proofreader*, NCERT, in shaping this textbook. We are grateful to the Publication Department, NCERT, for all its support.

The Council acknowledges the valuable inputs for analysying syllabi, textbooks and the content, proposed to be rationalised for this edition by Manju Bhatt, Dehradun, Uttarakhand; Achla Pritam Tandon, *Associate Professor,* Sociology, Hindu College, University of Delhi, New Delhi; Seema Banerjee, *PGT Sociology*, Laxman Public School Hauz Khas Enclave, New Delhi, and Abha Seth, *PGT Sociology*, Kishangarh, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi.

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SUGGESTIONS FOR USE

You have already gone through the earlier book. You are therefore familiar with the spirit of the National Curriculum Framework that the textbooks seek to communicate. The idea is to move away from learning by rote. The effort in the textbook is to give "higher priority and space to opportunities for contemplation and wondering, discussion in small groups, and activities requiring hands-on experience". Every effort has been made to connect the subject matter to the contemporary social environment and to the everyday life of the child. Towards making this possible, we have boxes that draw from reports in newspapers, magazines, brief extracts from fiction, government reports, apart from the many examples to the everyday life of children. The exercises and activities in the textbook are, therefore, an essential part of the book. An effort has also been made to draw from sociological writings to give a flavour of sociological research.

This has been a challenging, sometimes difficult task for us and we are aware that your suggestions will go a long way to improve upon it. Please do write to us at the following address – The Head, Department of Education in Social Sciences, NCERT, Sri Aurobindo Marg, New Delhi 110 016. Or you can send e-mail to: headdess@gmail.com. We look forward to your responses, and specially your critical comments, including suggestions for improvements in the layout and format. We promise to acknowledge all useful suggestions in the next edition of the textbook.

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THE CONSTITUTION OF INDIA

PREAMBLE

WE, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a [1]**[SOVEREIGN SOCIALIST SECULAR DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC]** and to secure to all its citizens :

JUSTICE, social, economic and political;

LIBERTY of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship;

EQUALITY of status and of opportunity; and to promote among them all

FRATERNITY assuring the dignity of the individual and the [2][unity and integrity of the Nation];

IN OUR CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY this twenty-sixth day of November, 1949 do **HEREBY ADOPT, ENACT AND GIVE TO OURSELVES THIS CONSTITUTION.**

---

1. Subs. by the Constitution (Forty-second Amendment) Act, 1976, Sec.2, for "Sovereign Democratic Republic" (w.e.f. 3.1.1977)
2. Subs. by the Constitution (Forty-second Amendment) Act, 1976, Sec.2, for "Unity of the Nation" (w.e.f. 3.1.1977)

Glossary

Body Language: The way people dress, talk, move, gesticulate, interact, carry themselves

Commercialisation: The process of transforming something into a product, service or activity that has economic value and can be traded in the market

Culture: Culture was understood as that which referred to knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.

Decentralisation: The process of gradual devolution or transfer of functions, resources and decision-making powers to the lower-level democratically elected bodies.

Digitalisation: The process, whereby information is produced as a universal binary code, and can thus be easily processed, stored and circulated at greater speed across communication technologies like Internet, satellite transmission, telephones, fiber optic lines, etc.

Disinvestment: Privatisation of public sector or government companies

Division of labour: Specialisation of tasks in ways that may involve exclusion from some opportunities. Hence, closure of labour opportunities exist in employment or by gender.

Diversification: Spread of investment into different types of economic activities in order to reduce risks.

Fordism: A system of production made popular by the American industrialist Henry Ford in the early part of 20th century. He popularised the assembly line method of mass production of a standardised product (cars). This era also led to payment of better wages to the workers and social welfare policies being implemented by both industrialists and the state.

Great and Little Tradition: The ways of folks or unlettered peasants constitute the Little Traditions and that of the elite or the reflective few constitute the Great Tradition. While the Little Tradition is often localised, Great Tradition has a tendency to spread out. However, studies of festivals in India show that sanskritic rites (Great Tradition) are often getting added to non-Sanskritic rites (Little Tradition) without replacing them.

Identity politics: A range of political activities that are founded in the shared experiences of a particular marginalised group such as gender, race, ethnic group, etc.

Import-substitution development strategy: The import substitution substitutes externally produced goods and services, especially basic necessities such as food, water and energy. The notion of import substitution was popularised in the 1950s and 1960s to promote economic independence in developing countries.

Industrialisation: The development of modern forms of industry — factories, machines and large-scale production processes. Industrialisation has been one of the main sets of processes influencing the social world over the past two centuries.

Means of production: The means whereby the production of material goods is carried on in a society, including not just technology but the social relations between producers.

Micro-electronics: The branch of electronics dealing with the miniaturisation of components and circuits. The giant step in the field of micro-electronics came in 1971 with the invention by an Intel engineer of the microprocessor that is a computer on a chip. In 1971, 2,300 transistors (a device for controlling flow of electricity) were packed on a

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chip of the size of a thumbtack, in 1993, there were 35 million transistors. Compare this with the first electronic computer which weighed 30 tons, was built on metal stands 9 feet tall and occupied the area of a gymnasium.

Mono crop regime: Planting a single crop or type of seed over a large area.

Norms: They consist of folkways, mores, customs, conventions and laws. These are values or rules that guide social behaviour in different contexts. We most often follow social norms because we are used to doing it, as a result of socialisation. All social norms are accompanied by sanctions that promote conformity. While norms are implicit rules, laws are explicit rules.

Optic fiber: A thin glass strand designed for light transmission. A single hair-thin fiber is capable of transmitting trillions of bits of information per second while a thin copper wire which was used earlier could transmit only 144,000 bits of information.

Outsourcing: Giving work out to other companies.

Patrilineality: A system in which one belongs to one's father's lineage or family

Piece rate wage: Payment on the basis of items produced.

Post-Fordism: The method of flexible production adopted by multinational companies who either off-shore their production units or outsource the whole process of production and distribution to third world countries because of the availability of cheap labour. This period also marks the growth of the financial sector and growth of the culture and leisure industry evident in the appearance in cities of shopping malls, multiplex cinema halls, amusement parks and the phenomenal growth in television channels.

Raiyatwari system: A system of tax collection in colonial India in which the government settled the revenue directly with the cultivator.

Reference Group: The social group which an individual or group desires to be like and therefore adopts its ways of dressing and behaving. Usually the reference group occupies a dominant position in society.

Sensex or Nifty index: These are indicators of the rise or fall in the share of the major companies. Sensex is the indicator of the shares of the major companies at the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) while Nifty is the indicator for the companies at the National Stock Exchange (NSE) located in New Delhi.

Social Fact: Those aspects of social life that shape our actions as individuals.

Sovereignty: The title to supreme power of a monarch, leader or government over an area with a clear-cut border.

Structure: A web of interactions, which are both regular and recurrent

Taylorism: System invented by Taylor, involving break up of work under management control.

Values: Ideas held by human individuals or groups about what is desirable, proper, good or bad. Differing values represent key aspects of variations in human culture. What individuals value is strongly influenced by the specific culture in which they happen to live.

Urbanisation: The development of towns and cities and decline in the dependency on agriculture for livelihood.

Zamindari system: A system of tax collection in colonial India in which the *zamindar* was given the rights to collect all taxes on lands cultivated by tenants and then hand over the revenue to the British authorities (keeping a portion for himself).

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1 Structural Change

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Understanding the present usually involves some grasp of its past. This holds true probably as much for an individual or social group as for an entire country such as India. India has a long and rich history. While knowing about its past in ancient and medieval times is very important, its colonial experience is particularly significant for comprehending modern India. This is not just because many modern ideas and institutions reached India through colonialism. It is also because such an exposure to modern ideas was contradictory or paradoxical. For example, Indians in the colonial period read about western liberalism and freedom. Yet they lived under a western, colonial rule that denied Indians liberty and freedom. It is contradictions of this kind that shaped many of the structural and cultural changes that Chapters 1 and 2 look at.

As the next few chapters shall show, our social reform and nationalist movements, our laws, our political life and our Constitution, our industry and agriculture, our cities and our villages have been shaped by our paradoxical experience with colonialism. This has had lasting implications for our specific experience with modernity. The following are just some of the many instances we face in our daily life.

We have a parliamentary and a legal system, a police and educational system built very much on the British model. We drive on the left side of the road like the British. We have 'bread-omlette' and 'cutlets' as menu offered in many roadside eateries and canteens. A very popular manufacturer of biscuits, is actually named after Britain. Many school uniforms include neck-ties. We often admire the west and as often resent it. These are just some of the many and complex ways that British colonialism lives on in contemporary India.

Different dimensions of modernity

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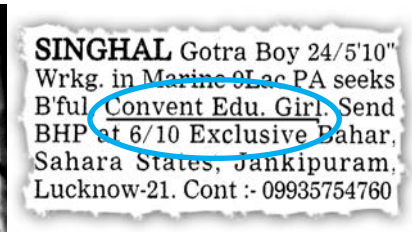

Let us take the example of the English language to show how its impact has been many sided and paradoxical in India. This is not a matter about wrong spellings alone. English is not only widely used in India but we now have an impressive body of literary writings by Indians in English. This knowledge of English has given Indians an edge in the global market. But English continues to be a mark of privilege. Not knowing English is a disadvantage that tells in the job market. At the same time for those who were traditionally deprived of access to formal education such as the Dalits, knowledge of English may open doors of opportunities that were formerly closed.

In this chapter we focus on structural changes that *colonialism* brought in. We, therefore, need to shift from this broad impressionistic view to a clearer understanding of colonialism as a structure and system. Colonialism brought into being new political, economic and social structural changes. In this chapter we look at only two of these structural changes namely *industrialisation* and *urbanisation*. While the focus is on specific colonial context, we also briefly touch on developments after independence.

All these structural changes were accompanied by cultural changes which, we look at in the next chapter. However any strict separation of the two is difficult. As you will see the structural changes are difficult to discuss without some mention of the cultural changes too.

Virtually English

Housewives and college students who know English take up plum assignments as online scorers in BPOs, writes K. Jeshi

It is a familiar classroom scene. The only unfamiliar thing is the setting. Computer screens turn blackboards and housewives take over as teachers to evaluate English essays written by non-English speaking students in Asia. All, at the click of the mouse. The encouraging comments given by the evaluators here motivate students in Japan, Korea and China to learn English.

Online education, the new wave in the BPO segment, is bringing cheer to those who want to earn a fast buck. All you need is a flair for English, creative skills, basic computer knowledge, the drive to go that extra mile and willingness to learn.

Source: The HINDU, Thursday, May 04, 2006

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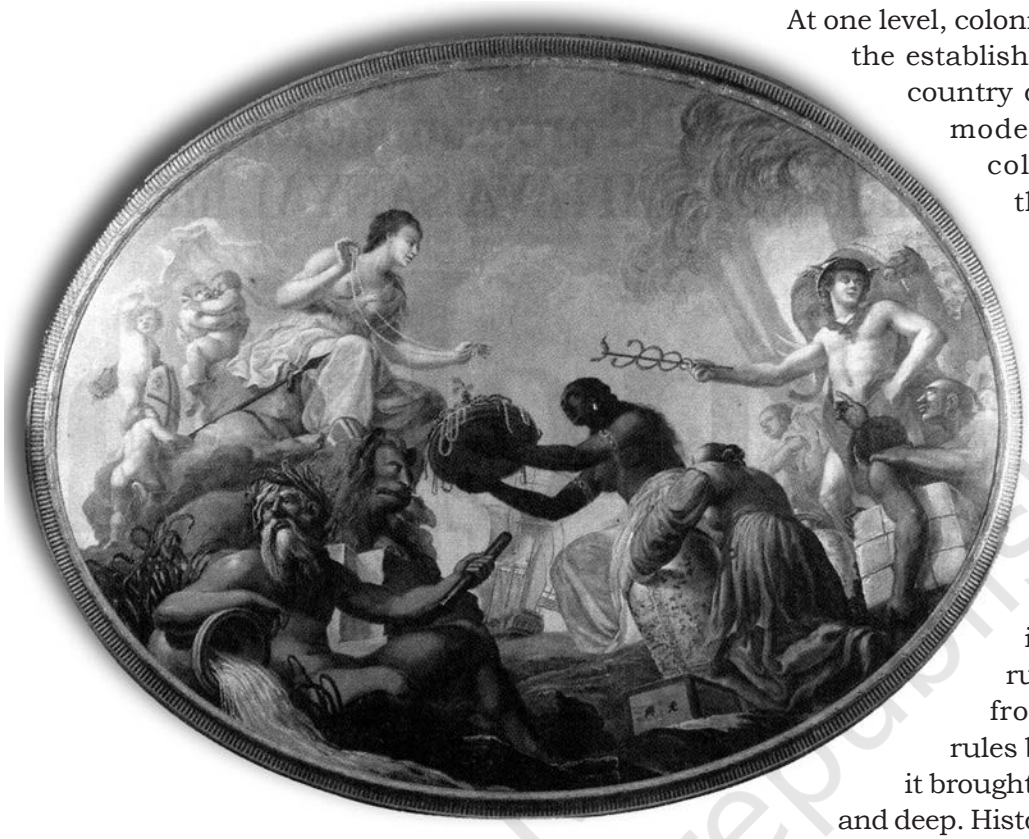
1.1 Understanding Colonialism



At one level, colonialism simply means the establishment of rule by one country over another. In the modern period western colonialism has had the greatest impact. India's past has been marked by the entry of numerous groups of people at different times who have established their rule over different parts of what constitutes modern India today. The impact of colonial rule is distinguishable from all other earlier rules because the changes it brought in were far-reaching and deep. History is full of examples of the annexation of foreign territory and the domination of weaker by stronger powers. Nevertheless, *there is a vital difference between the empire building of pre-capitalist times and that of capitalist times.* Apart from outright pillage, the pre-capitalist conquerors benefited from their domination by exacting a continuous flow of tribute. On the whole they did not interfere with the economic base. They simply took the tribute that was skimmed off the economic surplus that was produced traditionally in the subjugated areas. (Alavi and Shanin, 1982)

In contrast British colonialism which was based on a capitalist system directly interfered to ensure greatest profit and benefit to British capitalism. Every policy was geared towards the strengthening and expansion of British capitalism. For instance it changed the very laws of the land. It changed not just land ownership laws but decided even what crops ought to be grown and what ought not to be. It meddled with the manufacturing sector. It altered the way production and distribution of goods took place. It entered into the forests. It cleared trees and started tea plantations. It brought in Forest Acts that changed the lives of pastoralists. They were prevented from entering many forests that had earlier provided valuable forage for their cattle.

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Colonialism also led to considerable movement of people. It led to movement of people from one part to another within India. For instance people from present day Jharkhand moved to Assam to work on the tea plantations. A newly emerging middle class particularly from the British Presidency regions of Bengal and Madras moved as government employees and professionals like doctors and lawyers moved to different parts of the country. People were carted in ships from India to work on other colonised lands in distant Asia, Africa and Americas. Many died on their way. Most could never return. Today many of their descendents are known as people of Indian origin.

To facilitate the smooth functioning of its rule, colonialism introduced a wide array of changes in every sphere, be it legal or cultural or architectural. Colonialism was a story apart in the very scale and intensity of the changes that it brought about. Some of these changes were deliberate while some took place in an unintended fashion. For example, we saw how western education was introduced to create Indians who would manage British colonialism. Instead it led to the growth of a nationalist and anti-colonial consciousness.

Box 1.1

After 1834 till 1920, ships left from the ports of India on regular basis carrying people of various religions, gender, classes and castes destined to work for a minimum of five years on one of the plantations in Mauritius. For many decades, the recruiting ground was centred in Bihar, in particular, in districts, such as Patna, Gaya, Arrah, Saran, Tirhoot, Champaran, Munger (Monghyr), Bhagalpur and Purnea.

(Pineo 1984)

This magnitude and depth of the structural changes that colonialism unleashed can be better grasped if we try and understand some basic features of capitalism. Capitalism is an economic system in which the means of production are privately owned and organised to accumulate profits within a market system. (We have already discussed the capitalist market in the first book – *Indian Society*.) Capitalism in the west emerged out of a complex process of European exploration of the rest of the world, its plunder of wealth and resources, an unprecedented growth of science and technology, its harnessing to industries and agriculture. What marked capitalism from the very beginning was its dynamism, its potential to grow, expand, innovate, use technology and labour in a way best assured to ensure greatest profit. What marked it too was its global nature. Western colonialism was inextricably connected to the growth of western capitalism. This had a lasting impact on the way capitalism developed in a colonised country like India. In the next section on industrialisation and urbanisation, we see how colonialism led to very distinct patterns.

If capitalism became the dominant economic system, nation states became the dominant political form. That we all live in nation states and that we all have a nationality or a national citizenship may appear natural to us today. Before the First World War passports were not widely used for international travel, and in most areas few people had one. Societies were, however, not always organised on these lines. Nation state pertains to a particular type of state, characteristic of the modern world. A government has sovereign power

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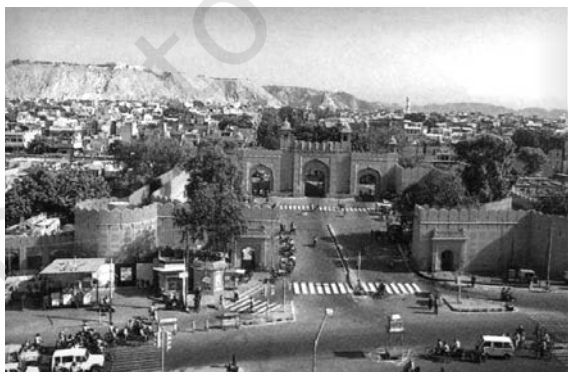
within a defined territorial area, and the people are citizens of a single nation. Nation states are closely associated with the rise of nationalism. The principle of nationalism assumes that any set of people have a right to be free and exercise sovereign power. It is an important part of the rise of democratic ideas. You will be reading more about this in Chapter 3. It must have struck you that the practice of colonialism and the principle of nationalism and democratic rights are contradictory. For colonial rule implied foreign rule such as British rule over India. Nationalism implied that the people of India or of any colonised society have an equal right to be sovereign. Indian nationalist leaders were quick to grasp this irony. They declared that freedom or *swaraj* was their birthright and fought for both political and economic freedom.

1.2 Urbanisation and Industrialisation

The Colonial Experience

Industrialisation refers to the emergence of machine production, based on the use of inanimate power resources like steam or electricity. In most standard western textbook of sociology, we learn that in even the most advanced of traditional civilizations, most people were engaged in working on the land. The relatively low level of technological development did not permit more than a small minority to be freed from the chores of agricultural production. By contrast, a prime feature of industrial societies today is that a large majority of the employed population work in factories, offices or shops rather than agriculture. Over 90 per cent of people in the west live in towns and cities, where most jobs are to be found and new job opportunities are created. Not surprisingly, therefore, we usually associate urbanisation with industrialisation. They often do occur together but not always so.

For instance in Britain, the first society to undergo industrialisation, was also the earliest to move from being rural to a predominantly urban country.



Jaipur

> In 1800, well under 20 per cent of the population lived in towns or cities of more than 10,000 inhabitants. By 1900 this proportion had become 74 per cent. The capital city, London, was home to about 1.1 million people in 1800; it increased in size to a population of over 7 million by the start of the twentieth century. London was then by far the largest city ever seen in the world, a vast manufacturing, commercial and financial centre at the heart of a still-expanding British empire. *(Giddens 2001: 572)*

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In India the impact of the very same British industrialisation led to *deindustrialisation* in some sectors, and *decline of old urban centres*. Just as manufacturing boomed in Britain, traditional exports of cotton and silk manufactures from India declined in the face of Manchester competition. This period also saw the further decline of cities such as Surat and Masulipatnam while Bombay and Madras grew. When the British took over Indian states, towns like Thanjavur, Dhaka, and Murshidabad lost their courts and, therefore, some of their artisans and court gentry. From the end of the 19th century, with the installation of mechanised factory industries, some towns became much more heavily populated.

Chennai

Mumbai

> Urban luxury manufactures like the high quality silks and cottons of Dacca or Murshidabad must have been hit first by the almost simultaneous collapse of indigeneous court demand and the external market on which these had largely depended. Village crafts in the interior, and particularly, in regions other than eastern India where British penetration was earliest and deepest, probably survived much longer, coming to be seriously affected only with the spread of railways. *(Sarkar 1983: 29)*

Unlike Britain where the impact of industrialisation led to more people moving into urban areas, in India the initial impact of the same British industrialisation led to more people moving into agriculture. The Census of India Report shows this clearly.

Box 1.2

The Census of India Report, 1911, Vol. 1, p. 408.

> The extensive importation of cheap European piecegoods and utensils, and the establishment in India itself of numerous factories of the Western type, have more or less destroyed many village industries. The high prices of agricultural produce have also led many village artisans to abandon their hereditary craft in favour of agriculture… The extent to which this disintegration of the old village organisation is proceeding varies considerably in different parts. The change is most noticeable in the more advanced provinces.

Sociological writings in India have often discussed both the contradictory and unintended consequences of colonialism. Comparisons have been made between the industrialisation in the west and the growth of a western middle class with that of the Indian experience. Box 1.3 carries one such observation. It also shows how industrialisation is not just about new machine based production but also a story of the growth of new social groups in society and new social relationships. In other words it is about changes in the Indian social structure.

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Cities had a key role in the economic system of empires. Coastal cities such as Mumbai, Kolkata and Chennai were favoured. From here primary commodities could be easily exported and manufactured goods could be cheaply imported. Colonial cities were the prime link between the economic centre or core in Britain and periphery or margins in colonised India. Cities in this sense were the concrete expression of global capitalism. In British India for example Bombay was planned and re-developed so that by 1900 over three-quarters of India's raw cotton were shipped through the city. Calcutta exported jute to Dundee while Madras sent coffee, sugar, indigo dyes and cotton to Britain.

Urbanisation in the colonial period saw the decline of some earlier urban centres and the *emergence of new colonial cities*. Kolkata was one of the first of such cities.

Box 1.3

The substitutes offered by the East India Company and subsequently by the British government were land ownership and facilities for education in English. The facts that the first remained unconnected with agricultural productivity and the second with the mainstream of Indian cultural traditions amply show that the alternatives were not sufficient in the sense that they could not create any genuine middle class. We know only too well that the zamindars become parasites in land and the graduates job hunters.

(Mukherjee 1979: 114)

Activity 1.1

- Find out more about the beginnings of the three cities.
- Find out also more about the story of the names they were called by leading to the very recent changes from Bombay to Mumbai, Madras to Chennai, Calcutta to Kolkata, Bangalore to Bengaluru.
- Find out about the growth of other colonial urban centres.

In 1690, an English merchant named Job Charnock arranged to lease three villages (named Kolikata, Gobindapur, and Sutanuti) by the river Hugli in order to set up a trading post. In 1698, Fort William was established by the river for defensive purposes, and a large open area was cleared around the fort for military engagements. The fort and the open area (called *Maidan*) formed the core of the city that emerged rather rapidly.

Box 1.4

A model of the South Asian colonial city

The European town...had spacious bungalows, elegant apartment houses, planned streets, trees on both sides of the street,...clubs for afternoon and evening get-togethers...The open space was reserved for...Western recreational facilities, such as race and golf courses, soccer and cricket. When domestic water supply, electric connections, and sewage links were available or technically possible, the European town residents utilised them fully, whereas their use was quite restricted to the native town.

(Dutt 1993: 361)

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The Tea Plantations

Tea garden

We have already seen how industrialisation and urbanisation did not happen in India quite the way it did in Britain. More importantly, this is not because we began industrialisation late, but because our early industrialisation and urbanisation in the modern period were governed by colonial interests.

We cannot go into details about different industries here. We simply take the case of the tea industry in India as an example. Official reports show how the colonial government often used unfair means to hire and forcibly keep labourers. And clearly acted on behalf of the British planters. From fictional and other accounts we get a glimpse of what life was for planters in this industry.

A woman plucking tea leaves

Significantly the colonial administrators were clear that harsh measures were taken against the labourers to make sure they benefited the planters. They were also fully aware that the laws of a colonised country did not have to stick to the democratic norms that the British back home had to follow in Britain.

You have a sense of the lives of the labourers. Let us see how the planters lived.

Box 1.5

How were labourers recruited?

Tea industry began in India in 1851. Most of the tea gardens were situated in Assam. In 1903, the industry employed 4,79,000 permanent and 93,000 temporary employees. Since Assam was sparsely populated and the tea plantations were often located on uninhabited hillsides, bulk of the sorely needed labour had to be imported from other provinces. But to bring thousands of people every year from their far-off homes into strange lands, possessing an unhealthy climate and infected with strange fevers, required the provision of financial and other incentives, which the tea-planters of Assam were unwilling to offer. Instead, they had recourse to fraud and coercion; and they persuaded the government to aid and abet them in this unholy task by passing penal laws. ...The recruitment of labourers for tea gardens of Assam was carried on for years mostly by contractors under the provisions of the Transport of Native Labourers Act (No. III) of 1863 of Bengal as amended in 1865, 1870 and 1873.

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Box 1.6

How did the planter's live?

Parbatpuri had always been an important offloading and loading point. The doughty British managers and their *mems* always came down from the estates surrounding Parbatpuri when a steamer docked there. In spite of the inaccessibility of the gardens, they had lived lives of luxury. Huge, sprawling bungalows, set on sturdy wooden stilts to protect the inmates from wild animals, were surrounded by velvety lawns and jewel bright flower beds…They had trained a large number of *malis*, *bawarchis* and bearers to serve them to perfection. Their wide verandahed houses gleamed and glistened under the ministrations of this army of liveried servants.

Of course, everything from scouring powder to self-raising flour, from saftey pins to silverware, from delicate Nottingham lace tablecloths to bath salts, had come up the river on the steamers. Indeed, even the large cast-iron bathtubs that were invitingly placed in huge bathrooms, tubs which were filled every morning by busy *bistiwallahs* carrying buckets up from the bungalow's well, had been brought up via steamer.

(Phukun 2005)

Industrialisation in Independent India

Activity 1.2

For many of you Amul Butter and other Amul milk products may be familiar names. Find out how this milk industry emerged?

We saw in the earlier section how the colonial state had an important role in the way industrialisation and urbanisation took place in India. Here we very briefly touch upon how the independent Indian state played an active role in promoting industrialisation. And in some sense was responding to the impact that colonialism had on the growth of industry in India. Chapter 5 will deal with Indian industrialisation and its shift from the early years of independence to developments after 1990 with liberalisation.

For Indian nationalists the issue of economic exploitation under colonial rule was a central issue. Images of pre-colonial fabled riches of India contrasted with the poverty of British India. The Swadeshi movement strengthened the loyalty to the national economy. Modern ideas made people realise that poverty was preventable. Indian nationalists saw rapid industrialisation of the economy as the path towards both growth and social equity. Development of heavy and machine-making industries, expansion of the public sector and holding of a large cooperative sector were considered very important.

Activity 1.3

Many new industrial towns emerged in India in the years after Independence. May be some of you live in such towns.

- Find out more about towns, like Bokaro, Bhilai, Rourkela and Durgapur. Find out whether such industrial towns exist in your region.
- Do you know of townships built around fertiliser plants and oil wells?
- If no such town exists in your region, find out the reasons for their absence.

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Urbanisation in Independent India

You would be more than aware of increasing urbanisation in India. Recent years of globalisation have led to enormous expansion and change of cities. In the 21st century, India will be witnessing fast pace of urbanisation with the ambitious scheme of 'Smart City' initiated by the Government of India. We shall be dealing with that later in Chapter 6. Here, we draw from a sociological account of the different kinds of urbanisation in India.

Writing on the different kinds of urbanisation witnesses in the first two decades after independence sociologist M.S.A. Rao argued that in India many villages all over India are becoming increasingly subject to the impact of urban influences. But the nature of urban impact varies according to the kind of relations a village has with a city or town. He describes three different situations of urban impact as mentioned in the box.

A view of an urban village

Box 1.7

Firstly, there are villages in which a sizeable number of people have sought employment in far-off cities. They live there leaving behind the members of their families in their natal villages. In Madhopur, a village in north central India, 77 out of 298 households have migrants, and a little less than half of all the migrants work in two cities of Bombay and Calcutta. About 75 percent of the total migrants send money regularly, and 83 per cent visit the village from four to five times a year to once in two years... A considerable number of emigrants reside not only in Indian cities but also in overseas towns. For instance, there are many overseas migrants from Gujarat villages living in African and British towns. They have built fashionable houses in their natal villages, invested money on land and industry, and have donated literally to the establishment of educational institutions and trusts...

The second kind of urban impact is to be seen in villages which are situated near an industrial town...When an industrial town like Bhilai comes up in the midst of villages, some villages are totally uprooted while the lands of others are partially acquired. The latter are found to receive an influx of immigrant workers, which not only stimulates a demand for houses and a market inside the village but creates problems of ordering relationships between the native residents and the immigrants...

...The growth of metropolitan cities accounts for the third type of urban impact on the surrounding villages...While a few villages are totally absorbed in the process of expansion, only the land of many others, excluding the inhabited area, is used for urban development...

(Rao 1974: 486–490)

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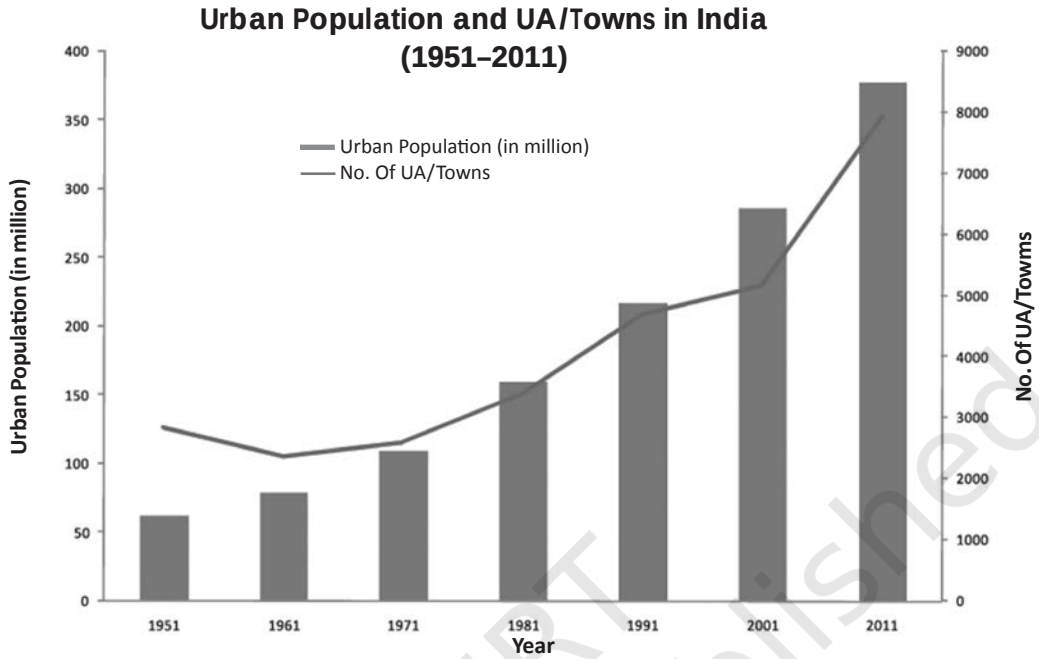
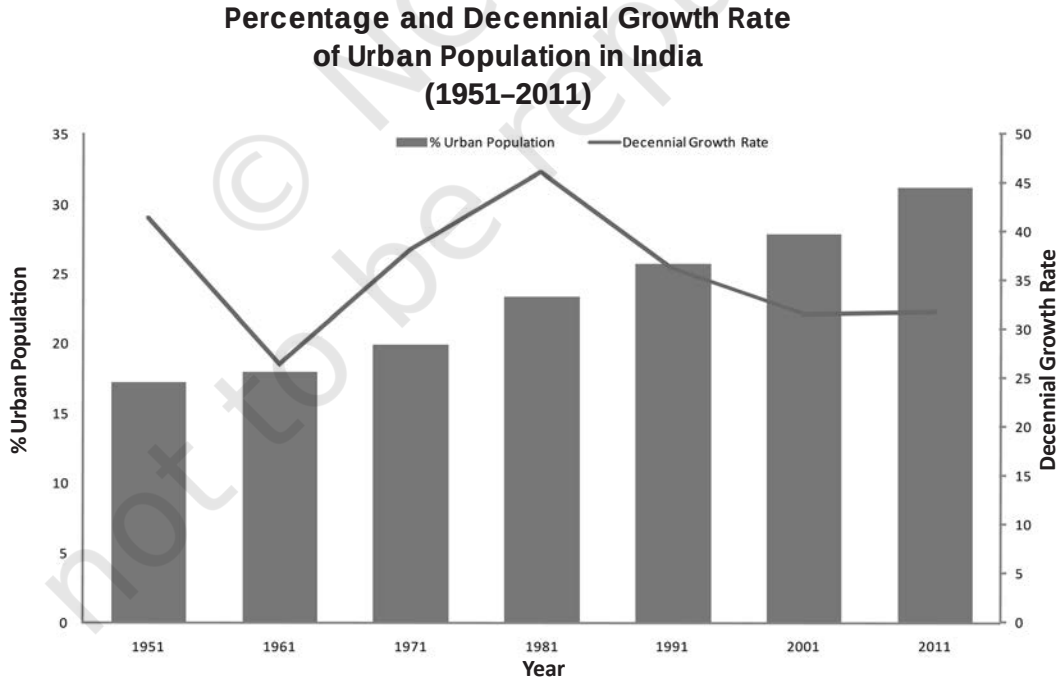
POPULATION OF SELECTED METROPOLITAN CITIES (URBAN AGGLOMERATIONS)



DECADAL GROWTH RATE POPULATION OF SELECTED METROPOLITAN CITIES IN PERCENTAGE



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The above chart indicates that the urban population and the number of UA/ Towns in India are increasing. The chart below indicates that the per cent share of the urban population is increasing but decennial growth rate of the urban population shows a decreasing trend.

In 1951, 17.29% of India's population i.e., 62.44 million people, were living in 2,843 towns. In 2011, 31.16% of India's population i.e., 377.10 million people, were living in 7,935 towns. This shows a steady increase in terms of absolute numbers, number of UA/towns and the per cent share of the urban population. However, the decennial growth rate of the urban population showed a declining trend during 1981–2001, reversed the trend and showed marginal increase in 2011. The decennial growth rate of the urban population in 1951 was 41.42% and in 2011, it was 31.80%.

For the first time since Independence, the absolute increase in population is more in urban areas than in rural areas. This is due to a sharp decline in the growth rate in rural areas, while the growth rate in urban areas remains almost the same.

Conclusion

It will be obvious to you that colonialism is not just a topic in history but something which lives on in complex ways in our lives even today. It is also evident from the above account that industrialisation and urbanisation imply changes not just in production systems, technological innovations, density of settlements but also 'a way of life' (Wirth, 1938). You shall be reading more about industrialisation and urbanisation in independent India in Chapter 5 and 6.

Questions

1. How has colonialism impacted our lives? You can either focus on one aspect, like culture or politics, or treat them together.
2. Industrialisation and urbanisation are linked processes. Discuss.
3. Identify any town or city with which you are familiar. Find out both the history of its growth and its contemporary status.
4. You may be living in a very small town, may be in a very big city, a semi-urban settlement or a village.
   - Describe the place where you live.
   - What are the features, which make you think it is a town and not a city, a village and not a town, or a city and not a village?
   - Is there any factory where you live?
   - Is agriculture the main job that people do?
   - Is it the occupational nature that has a determining influence?
     - Is it the buildings?
     - Is it the availability of educational opportunities?
     - Is it the way people live and behave?
     - Is it the way people talk and dress?

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2 Cultural Change

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We saw in the last chapter how colonialism brought in changes that altered the structure of Indian society. Industrialisation and urbanisation transformed the lives of people. Factories replaced fields as places of work for some. Cities replaced villages as places to live for many. Living and working arrangements or structures changed. Changes also took place in culture, ways of life, norms, values, fashions and even body language. Sociologists understand social structure as a 'continuing arrangement of persons in relationships defined or controlled by institutions' and 'culture' as 'socially established norms or patterns of behaviour'. You have already studied about the structural changes that colonialism brought about in Chapter 1. You will observe how important those structural changes are for understanding the cultural changes that this chapter seeks to understand.

This chapter looks at two related developments, both a complex product of the impact of colonial rule. The *first* deals with the deliberate and conscious efforts made by the 19th century social reformers and early 20th century nationalists to bring in changes in social practices that discriminated against women and 'lower' castes. The *second* with the less deliberate yet decisive changes in cultural practices that can broadly be understood as the four processes of sanskritisation, modernisation, secularisation and westernisation. Sanskritisation pre-dates the coming of colonial rule. The other three processes can be understood better as complex responses of the people of India to the changes that colonialism brought about.

2.1 Social Reform Movements in the 19th and Early 20th Century

Raja Ram Mohun Roy *Pandita Ramabai* *Sir Syed Ahmed Khan*

You have already seen the far-reaching impact of colonialism on our lives. The social reform movements which emerged in India in the 19th century arose to the challenges that colonial Indian society faced. You probably are familiar with what were termed social evils that plagued Indian society. The well-known issues are that of *sati*, child marriage, ban on widow remarriage and caste discrimination. It is not that attempts were not made to fight social discrimination in pre-colonial India. They were central to Buddhism, *Bhakti* and *Sufi* movements. What marked these 19th century social reform attempts was the modern context and mix of ideas. It was a creative combination of modern ideas of western liberalism and a new look on traditional literature.

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Box 2.1

The mix of ideas

- Raja Ram Mohun Roy attacked the practice of *sati* on the basis of both appeals to humanitarian and natural rights doctrines as well as Hindu *shastras*.
- Ranade's writings entitled *The Texts of the Hindu Law* on *the Lawfulness of the Remarriage of Widows* and *Vedic Authorities for Widow Marriage* elaborated the *shastric* sanction for remarriage of widows.
- The content of new education was modernising and liberal. The literary content of the courses in the humanities and social sciences was drawn from the literature of the European Renaissance, Reformation and Enlightenment. Its themes were humanistic, secular and liberal.
- Sir Syed Ahmed Khan's interpretation of Islam emphasised the validity of free enquiry (*ijtihad*) and the alleged similarities between Koranic revelations and the laws of nature discovered by modern science.
- Kandukiri Viresalingam's *The Sources of Knowledge* reflected his familiarity with *navya-nyaya* logic. At the same time he translated the works of Julius Huxley, an eminent biologist.

Sociologist Satish Saberwal elaborates upon the modern context by sketching three aspects to the modern framework of change in colonial India:

- modes of communication
- forms of organisation, and
- the nature of ideas

New technologies speeded up various forms of communication. The printing press, telegraph, and later the microphone, movement of people and goods through steamship and railways helped quick movement of new ideas. Within India, social reformers from Punjab and Bengal exchanged ideas with reformers from Madras and Maharashtra. Keshav Chandra Sen of Bengal visited Madras in 1864. Pandita Ramabai travelled to different corners of the country. Some of them went to other countries. Christian missionaries reached remote corners of present day Nagaland, Mizoram and Meghalaya.

Modern social organisations like the Brahmo Samaj in Bengal and Arya Samaj in Punjab were set up. The All-India Muslim Ladies Conference (*Anjuman-E-Khawatn-E-Islam*) was founded in 1914. Indian reformers debated not just in public meetings but through public media like newspapers and journals. Translations of writings of social reformers from one Indian language to another took place. For instance, Vishnu Shastri published a Marathi translation of Vidyasagar's book in *Indu Prakash* in 1868.

New ideas of liberalism and freedom, new ideas of homemaking and marriage, new roles for mothers and daughters, new ideas of self-conscious pride in culture and tradition emerged. The value of education became very important. It was seen as very crucial for a nation to become modern but also

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The first Ford T in Dehra Dun
The first ever bicycle in Dehra Dun was brought dismembered and packed in a box by Alfred Massey. Assembled, it caused such a flutter that he decided to bring the first Ford Model T to Massey's Garage. *Ford News*, January 11, 1980 retells the story: '1914: It was the first car the locals had ever seen.... People came by train and bullock cart to see the car. A crowd went to the station to watch the "engine" with rubber tyres being unloaded. It took an hour to fit the wheels and open the hood. The huge packing case was bought by a hawker to serve as a shop. Some 14 men, women, and children climbed on the car and were given their first motor ride up to the family's garage'. Here, Sarah (next to the child) stands with her mother beside the car.

Viresalingam

Vidyasagar

Jotiba Phule

retain its ancient heritage. The idea of female education was debated intensely. Significantly, it was the social reformer Jotiba Phule who opened the first school for women in Pune. Reformers argued that for a society to progress women have to be educated. Some of them believed that in pre-modern India, women were educated. Others contested this on the grounds that this was so only of a privileged few. Thus attempts to justify female education were made by recourse to both modern and traditional ideas. They actively debated the meanings of tradition and modernity. Jotiba Phule thus recalled the glory of pre-Aryan age while others like Bal Gangadhar Tilak emphasised the glory of the Aryan period. In other words, 19th century reform initiated a period of questioning, reinterpretations and both intellectual and social growth.

The varied social reform movements did have common themes. Yet there were also significant differences. For some the concerns were confined to the problems that the upper caste, middle class women and men faced. For others the injustices suffered by the discriminated castes were central questions. For some social evils had emerged because of a decline of the true spirit of Hinduism. For others caste and gender oppression was intrinsic to the religion.

Activity 2.1

Find out about some of the social reformers mentioned below? What issues did they fight for? How did they conduct their campaign? Was there any opposition?

- Viresalingam
- Pandita Ramabai
- Vidyasagar
- Dayanand Saraswati
- Jyotiba Phule
- Sri Narayan Guru
- Sir Syed Ahmed Khan
- Any other

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Likewise Muslim social reformers actively debated the meaning of polygamy and purdah. For example, a resolution against the evils of polygamy was proposed by Jahanara Shah Nawas at the All India Muslim Ladies Conference. She argued:

> ...the kind of polygamy which is practiced by certain sections of the Muslims is against the true spirit of the Quran...and it is the duty of the educated women to exercise their influence among the relations to put an end to this practice.

The resolution condemning polygamy caused considerable debate in the Muslim press. *Tahsib-e-Niswan*, the leading journal for women in the Punjab, came out in favour of the resolve, but others disapproved. (Chaudhuri 1993: 111). Debates within communities were common during this period. For instance, *sati* was opposed by the Brahmo Samaj. Orthodox members of the Hindu community in Bengal formed an organisation called Dharma Sabha and petitioned the British arguing that reformers had no right to interpret sacred texts.

2.2 Different Kinds of Social Change

In this chapter each of the four concepts, namely sanskritisation, modernisation, secularisation and westernisation, are dealt with in different sections. But as the discussion unfolds, it will become obvious to you that in many ways they overlap and in many situations they co-exist. In many situations they operate very differently. It is not surprising to find the same person being modern in some ways and traditional in another. This co-existence is often seen as natural to India and many other non-western countries.

But you know that sociology does not rest content with naturalist explanation. (Recall the discussion in Chapter 1, Class XI book - *Introducing Sociology*. As the last chapter has shown colonial modernity had its own paradoxes. Take the example of western education. Colonialism led to the growth of an English educated Indian middle class. They read the thinkers of western enlightenment, philosophers of liberal democracy and dreamt of ushering in a liberal and progressive India. And yet, humiliated by colonial rule they asserted their pride in traditional learning and scholarship. You have already seen this trend in the 19th century reform movements.

Activity 2.2

While you read the way the four processes are used in sociology, it may be interesting to discuss in class what you think the terms mean.

- What kind of behaviour would you define as:
  - Western
  - Modern
  - Secular
  - Sanskritised
- Why?
- Return to Activity 2.2 after you finish the chapter.
- Did you find any difference between common sense usage of the terms and their sociological meaning?

As this chapter will show, modernity spelled not merely new ideas but also rethinking and reinterpretation of tradition. Both culture and tradition are living

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entities. People learn them and in turn modify them. Take the everyday example of how the *sari* or *jain sem* or *sarong* is worn in India today. Traditionally the sari, a loose unstitched piece of cloth was differently worn in different regions. The standard way that the modern middle class woman wears it was a novel combination of the traditional sari with the western 'petticoat' and 'blouse'.

India's structural and cultural diversity is self-evident. This diversity shapes the different ways that modernisation or westernisation, sanskritisation or secularisation effects or does not effect different groups of people. The following pages seek to capture these differences. The constraint of space prevents a further detailing out. It is up to you to explore and identify the complex ways modernisation impacts people in different parts of the country or impacts different classes and castes in the same region. And even women and men from the same class or community.

The mix and match of the traditional and modern

Activity 2.3

- Think of other instances of the mix and match both from everyday life and from the wider level.

My father's clothes represented his inner life very well. He was a south Indian Brahmin gentleman. He wore neat white turbans, a Sri Vaisnava caste mark ..yet wore Tootal ties, Kromentz buttons and collar studs, and donned English serge jackets over his muslin *dhotis* which he wore draped in traditional Brahmin style.

Source: A.K. Ramanujan in Marriot ed. 1990: 42

2.3 Different Kinds of Social Change

Sanskritisation

The term sanskritisation was coined by M.N. Srinivas. It may be briefly defined as the process by which a 'low' caste or tribe or other group takes over the customs, ritual, beliefs, ideology and style of life of a high and, in particular, a 'twice-born (*dwija*) caste'.

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The impact of Sanskritisation is many-sided. Its influence can be seen in language, literature, ideology, music, dance, drama, style of life and ritual.

It is primarily a process that takes place within the Hindu space though Srinivas argued that it was visible even in sects and religious groups outside Hinduism. Studies of different areas, however, show that it operated differently in different parts of the country. In those areas where a highly Sanskritised caste was dominant, the culture of the entire region underwent a certain amount of Sanskritisation. In regions where the non-Sanskritic castes were dominant, it was their influence that was stronger. This can be termed the process of 'de-Sanskritisation'. There were other regional variations too. In Punjab culturally Sanskritic influence was never very strong. For many centuries until the third quarter of the 19th century, the Persian influence was the dominant one.

Srinivas argued that, "the Sanskritisation of a group has usually the effect of improving its position in the local caste hierarchy. It normally presupposes either an improvement in the economic or political position of the group concerned or a higher group self-consciousness resulting from its contact with a source of the 'Great Tradition' of Hinduism such as a pilgrim centre or a monastery or a proselytising sect." But in a highly unequal society such as India there were and still are obstacles to any easy taking over of the customs of the higher castes by the lower. Indeed, traditionally, the dominant caste punished those low castes, which were audacious enough to attempt it. The story below captures the problem.

> Kumudtai's journey into Sanskrit began with great interest and eagerness with Gokhale Guruji, her teacher at school… At the University, the Head of the Department was a well-known scholar and he took great pleasure in taunting Kumudtai…Despite the adverse comments she successfully completed her Masters in Sanskrit….
>
> *Source: Kumud Pawade (1938)*

Kumud Pawade in her autobiography recounts how a Dalit woman became a Sanskrit teacher. As a student she is drawn towards the study of Sanskrit, perhaps because it is the means through which she can break into a field that was not possible for her to enter on grounds of gender and caste. Perhaps she was drawn towards it because it would enable her to read in the original what the texts have to say about women and the Dalits. As she proceeds with her studies, she meets with varied reactions ranging from surprise to hostility, from guarded acceptance to brutal rejection. As she says:

> The result is that although I try to forget my caste, it is impossible to forget. And then I remember an expression I heard somewhere: "What comes by birth, but can't be cast off by dying - that is caste."

Sanskritisation suggests a process whereby people want to improve their status through adoption of names and customs of culturally high-placed groups. The 'reference model' is usually financially better of. In both, the aspiration or desire to be like the higher placed group occurs only when people become wealthier.

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Sanskritisation as a concept has been criticised at different levels. *One*, it has been criticised for exaggerating social mobility or the scope of 'lower castes' to move up the social ladder. For it leads to no structural change but only positional change of some individuals. In other words inequality continues to persist though some individuals may be able to improve their positions within the unequal structure. *Two*, it has been pointed out that the ideology of sanskritisation accepts the ways of the 'upper caste' as superior and that of the 'lower caste' as inferior. Therefore, the desire to imitate the 'upper caste' is seen as natural and desirable.

Third, 'sanskritisation' seems to justify a model that rests on inequality and exclusion. It appears to suggest that to believe in pollution and purity of groups of people is justifiable or all right.

Fourth, since sanskritisation results in the adoption of upper caste rites and rituals it leads to practices of secluding girls and women, adopting dowry practices instead of bride-price and practising caste discrimination against other groups, etc.

ACTIVITY 2.4

Read the section on Sanskritisation very carefully. Do you think that this process is gendered, i.e., it affects women differently from men. Do you think that even if it does lead to positional change among men, the reverse may be true about women?

Fifth, the effect of such a trend is that the key characteristics of *dalit* culture and society are eroded. For example the very worth of labour which 'lower castes' do is degraded and rendered 'shameful'. Identities based on the basis of work, crafts and artisanal abilities, knowledge forms of medicine, ecology, agriculture, animal husbandry, etc., are regarded useless in the industrial era.

With the growth of the anti-Brahminical movement and the development of regional self-consciousness in the twentieth century there was an attempt in several Indian languages to drop Sanskrit words and phrases. A crucial result of the Backward Classes Movement was to emphasise the role of secular factors in the upward mobility of caste groups and individuals. In the case of the dominant castes, there was no longer any desire to pass for the Vaisyas, Kshatriyas and Brahmins. On the other hand, it was prestigious to be a member of the dominant caste. Recent years have seen likewise assertions of Dalits who now pride their identity as Dalits.

WESTERNISATION

You have already read about our western colonial past. You have seen how it often brought about changes that were paradoxical and strange. M.N. Srinivas defines westernisation as "the changes brought about in Indian society and culture as a result of over 150 years of British rule, the term subsuming changes occurring at different levels...technology, institutions, ideology and values".

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There were different kinds of westernisation. *One* kind refers to the emergence of a westernised sub-cultural pattern through a minority section of Indians who first came in contact with Western culture. This included the sub culture of Indian intellectuals who not only adopted many cognitive patterns, or ways of thinking, and styles of life, but supported its expansion. Many of the early 19th century reformers were of this kind. The boxes show the different kinds of westernisation.

There were, therefore, small sections of people who adopted western life styles or were affected by western ways of thinking. Apart from this there has been also the general spread of Western cultural traits, such as the use of new technology, dress, food, and changes in the habits and styles of people in general. Across the country a very wide section of middle class homes have a television set, a fridge, some kind of sofa set, a dining table and chair in the living room.

Westernisation does involve the imitation of external forms of culture. It does not necessarily mean that people adopt modern values of democracy and equality.

Activity 2.5

- Can you think of Indians who are very western in their clothes and appearances but who do not have democratic and egalitarian values that are part of modern attitudes. We are giving two examples below. Can you think of other instances from both real and reel life?

  We may find people who are western educated but holding very prejudiced views about particular ethnic or religious communities. A family can adopt external forms of western culture like the way the interiors of houses are done up but may have very conservative ideas about women's role in society. The practice of female foeticide combines discriminatory attitude towards women and the use of very modern technology.

- You should also discuss that whether this contradiction is only true for the Indians or non-western societies. Or is it not equally true that racist and discriminatory attitudes exist in western societies.

Apart from ways of life and thinking, the west influenced Indian art and literature. Artists like Ravi Varma, Abanindranath Tagore, Chandu Menon and Bankimchandra Chattopadhya were all grappling with the colonial encounter. The box below captures the many ways that style, technique and the very theme of an artist like Ravi Varma were shaped by western and indigeneous traditions. It discusses the portrait of a family in a matrilineal community of Kerala but one that significantly resembles the very typical patrilineal nuclear family of the modern west consisting of the father, mother and children.

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Raja Ravi Varma

You can see the many diverse levels that cultural change, resulting from our colonial encounter with the west, took place. In the contemporary context often conflicts between generations are seen as cultural conflicts resulting from westernisation. Have you seen this or faced this? Is Westernisation the only reason for generational conflicts? Are conflicts necessarily bad?

Srinivas suggested that while 'lower castes' sought to be Sanskritised, 'upper castes' sought to be Westernised. In a diverse country such as India this generalisation is difficult to maintain. For instance, studies of Thiyyas (by no means considered 'upper caste') in Kerala show conscious efforts to westernise. Elite Thiyyas appropriated British culture as a move towards a more cosmopolitan life that critiqued caste. Likewise, Western education often implied opening up to new opportunities for different groups of people in the North- East. Read the account given in Box 2.4.

Box 2.2

In 1870 Ravi Varma received his first paid commission to paint the portrait of Kizhakke Palat Krishna Menon's family. ...This is a transitional work which blends elements of a flatter, two-dimensional style popular within earlier water-colours with the newer techniques of perspective and illusionism, made possible by the use of a medium like oil. ...Another feature is the technique of spatial organisations of the seated and figures in deference to age and hierarchy, which is once again reminiscent of nineteenth century European portraits of the bourgeois family. ...How strange then this portrait was painted in matrilineal Kerala at a time when most of the Nayars, Krishna, Menon's caste, would have been unused to living in patrilocal nuclear families...

Source: G . Arunima "Face value: Ravi Varma's portraiture and the project of colonial modernity". The Indian Economic and Social History Review 40, 1 (2003) pp. 57–80.

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Box 2.3

Often westernisation among the middle class makes generational difference more complex

…And though they are of my own flesh and blood, they sometimes seem like total strangers to me. I no longer have anything in common with them…neither with their ways of thinking, nor with the way they dress up, talk or behave. They are the new generation. And my mental makeup is such that any sort of mutuality between them and me becomes impossible. Yet I love them with all my heart. I give them whatever they desire, for their happiness is all I want. Rabindranth's words set my heart in a tremulous feeling: "This is your time; for now is the beginning of my end." I have nothing in common with my children Pallav, Kallol and Kingkini. Pallav lives in a different country, in a different culture altogether. We, for instance, had worn the mekela-chadar from the age of twelve. But now my daughter Kingkini, a student of Business Management at Gauhati University wears pant and buggy shirts. And Kallol likes to sport a mass of unruly hair on his head. When I feel listening to a Meera-Bhajan, Kallol and Kingkini choose to play their favourite pop numbers by Whitney Houston. At times, when I feel like singing a few lines of Bargeet, Kinkin likes to play western tunes on her guitar.

Source: Anima Dutta 1999 "As Days Roll On" in Women: A Collection of Assamese Short Stories, *Diamond Jubilee Volume, (Guwahati, Spectrum Publications)*

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Box 2.4

My grandfather, like most Nagas who had come into close contact with Europeans, was convinced that education was the only way to get ahead in life. He aspired for his children the kind of life he had seen being lived by the British administration and missionaries. He sent my mother away to school first in neighbouring Assam, then as far away as Shimla. My mother was encouraged by one of the more educated men in her village who told her that with an education in these new times, she could even become like the Indian lady who spoke before the world- Vijaylakshmi Pandit, sister of Nehru, who represented India at the UN. My father by dint of his own intelligence and hard work, put himself through the local mission school and college in Shillong. All Nagas of my parents' generation who were able to, chose to get educated in English. For them it was more than a gateway to upward mobility. In a region where tribes that live no more than 20 kms apart speak completely different languages, it was a medium through which they could communicate amongst themselves and with the world. They became the voice of their people and made English the official state language. *(Ao 2005: 111)*

What kind of modernity?

They (upper caste founders of various oganisations and conferences) pretend to be modernists as long as they are in the service of the British government. The moment they retire and claim their pensions, they get into their brahmanical 'touch-me-not attire'…

Jotiba Phule's letter to the Conference of Marathi Authors

Modernisation and Secularisation

The term *modernisation* has a long history. From the 19th and more so the 20th century, the term began to be associated with positive and desirable values. People and societies wanted to be modern. In the early years, modernisation referred to improvement in technology and production processes. Increasingly, however, the term had a wider usage. It referred to the path of development that much of west Europe or North America has taken. And suggested that other societies both have to and ought to follow the same path of development.

In India the beginnings of capitalism, as we saw in Chapter 1, took place within the colonial context. The story of our modernisation and secularisation is, therefore, quite distinct from their growth in the west. This is evident when we discussed westernisation and the efforts of the 19th century social movements earlier in this chapter. Here we look into the two processes of modernisation and secularisation together for they are linked. They are both part of a set of modern ideas. Sociologists have tried to define what exactly constitutes the modernisation process.

> '[M]odernity' assumes that local ties and parochial perspectives give way to universal commitments and cosmopolitan attitudes; that the truths of utility, calculation, and science take precedence over those of the emotions, the sacred, and the non-rational; that the individual rather than the group be the primary unit of society and politics; that the associations in which men live and work be based on choice not birth; that mastery rather than fatalism orient their attitude toward the material and human environment; that identity be chosen and achieved, not ascribed and affirmed; that work be separated from family, residence, and community in bureaucratic organisation….*(Rudolph and Rudolph, 1967)*

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In other words it means that people are influenced not just by local but universal contexts. How you behave, what you think is no longer decided by your family or tribe or caste or community. What job you wish to do is decided not by the job your parent does, but by what you wish to do. Work gets based on choice, not birth. On whom you are depend on what you achieve, not by who you are. A scientific attitude gains ground.

In the modern west, *secularisation* has usually meant a process of decline in the influence of religion. It has been an assumption of all theorists of modernisation that modern societies become increasingly secular. Indicators of secularisation have referred to levels of involvement with religious organisations, the social and material influence of religious organisations, and the degree to which people hold religious beliefs. Recent years have, however, seen an unprecedented growth of religious consciousness and conflict world over.

ACTIVITY 2.6

Take any matrimonial column from any newspaper or websites like *shaadi.com* and try and see the pattern. How often is caste or community mentioned? If it is mentioned many times does it mean that caste continues to play the same kind of role as it did traditionally? Or has the role of caste changed? Discuss.

However even in the past, a view that assumed that modern ways would necessarily lead to decline in religious ways has not been entirely true. You will recall how western and modern forms of communication, organisation and ideas led to the emergence of new kinds of religious reform organisations. Furthermore, a considerable part of ritual in India has direct reference to the pursuit of secular ends.

> Rituals have also secular dimensions as distinct from secular goals. They provide men and women with occasions for socialising with their peers and superiors, and for showing off the family's wealth, clothing and jewellery. During the last few decades in particular, the economic, political and status dimensions of ritual have become increasingly conspicuous, and the number of cars lined up outside a wedding house and the VIPs who attended the wedding, provide the index to the household's standing in the local community.

ACTIVITY 2.7

Observe advertisements during traditional festivals such as Diwali, Durga Puja, Ganesh Puja, Dusserah, Karwa Chauth, Id, Christmas. Collect different advertisements from the print media. Watch the electronic media also. Note what the messages of these advertisements are about.

There has also been considerable debate about what is seen by some as secularisation of caste. What does this mean? In traditional India caste system operated within a religious framework. Belief systems of purity and pollution were central to its practice. Today it often functions as political pressure groups. Contemporary India has seen such formation of caste associations and caste based political parties. They seek to press upon the state their demands. Such a changed role of caste has been described as secularisation of caste. The box below illustrates this process.

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Box 2.5

Everyone recognises that the traditional social system in India was organised around caste structures and caste identities. In dealing with the relationship between caste and politics, however the doctrinaire moderniser suffers from a serious xenophobia. He begins with the questions: is caste disappearing? Now, surely no social system disappears like that. A more useful point of departure would be: *what form is caste taking under the impact of modern politics, and what form is politics taking in a caste-oriented society*?

Those in India who complain of 'casteism in politics' are really looking for a sort of politics, which has no basis in society. ...Politics is a competitive enterprise, its purpose is the acquisition of power for the realisation of certain goals, and its process is one of identifying and manipulating existing and emerging allegiances in order to mobilise and consolidate positions. The important thing is organisation and articulation of support, and where politics is mass-based, the point is to articulate support through the organisations in which the masses are to be found. It follows that *where the caste structure provides one of the principal organisational clusters along which the bulk of the population is found to live, politics must strive to organise through such a structure*.

Politicians mobilise caste groupings and identities in order to organise their power. ...Where there are other types of groups and other bases of association, politicians approach them as well. And as they everywhere change the form of such organisations, they change the form of caste as well.

(Kothari 1977: 57–70)

Conclusion

This chapter has sought to show the distinct ways that social change has taken place in India. The colonial experience had lasting consequences. Many of these were unintended and paradoxical. Western ideas of modernity shaped the imagination of Indian nationalists. It also prompted a fresh look at traditional texts by some. It also led to a rejection of these by others. Western cultural forms found their place in spheres ranging from how families lived to what codes of conduct should men, women and children have to follow as artistic expressions. The ideas of equality and democracy made a huge impact as evident in both the reform movements and the nationalist movement. This led not just to adoption of western ideas, but also an active questioning and reinterpretation of tradition.

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Questions

1. Write a critical essay on sanskritisation.
2. Westernisation is often just about adoption of western attire and lifestyle. Are there other aspects to being westernised? Or is that about modernisation? Discuss.
3. Write short notes on:
   - Rites and secularisation
   - Caste and secularisation
   - Gender and sanskritisation

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Notes

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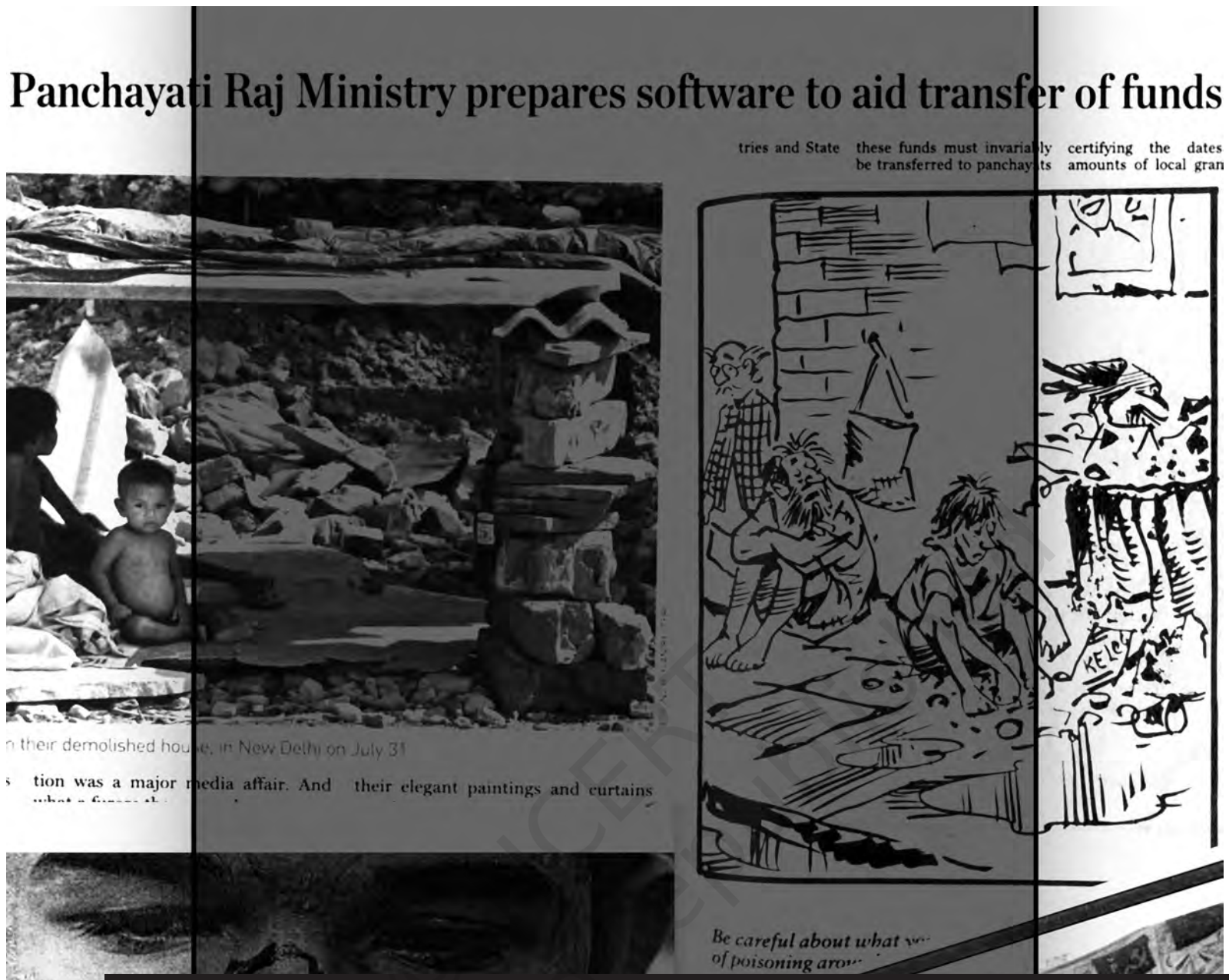

3 The Constitution and Social Change

You will realise that the Constitution has the capacity to help people because it is based on the basic norms of social justice. For instance, the Directive Principle on Village Panchayats was moved as an amendment in the Constituent Assembly by K. Santhanam. After forty odd years, it became a Constitutional imperative after the 73rd Amendment in 1992.

The Constitution is not just a ready referencer of do's and don'ts for social justice. It has the potential to extend the meaning of social justice. Social movements have also aided the courts and authorities to interpret the contents of rights and principles in keeping with the contemporary understanding on social justice.

Constitutional Norms and Social Justice: Interpretation to Aid Social Justice

It is useful to understand that there is a difference between law and justice. The essence of law is its force. Law is law because it carries the means to coerce or force obedience. The power of the state is behind it. The essence of justice is fairness. Any system of law functions through a hierarchy of authorities. Constitution is the basis of all rules and authorities. It is the document that constitutes a nation's tenets. The Indian Constitution is India's basic norm. All other laws are made as per the procedures prescribed by the Constitution. These laws are made and implemented by the authorities specified by the Constitution. A hierarchy of courts (which too are authorities created by the Constitution) inerpret the laws when there is a dispute. The Supreme Court is the highest court and the ultimate interpreter of the Constitution.

The Supreme Court has enhanced the substance of Fundamental Rights in the Constitution in many important ways. The Box below illustrates a few instances.

Box 3.1

- A Fundamental Right includes all that is incidental to it. The terse words of Article 21 recognising *the right to life and liberty* have been interpreted as including all that goes into a life of quality, including livelihood, health, shelter, education and dignity. In various pronouncements, different attributes of 'life' have been expanded and 'life' has been explained to mean more than mere animal existence. These interpretations have been used to provide relief to prisoners subjected to torture and deprivation, release and rehabilitation of bonded labourers, against environmentally degrading activities, to provide primary healthcare and primary education. In 1993 the Supreme Court held that Right to Information is a part of and incidental to the Right to Freedom of Speech and Expression under Article 19(1) (a).
- The Supreme Court read the Directive Principle of Equal Pay for Equal Work into the Fundamental Rights to Equality under Article 14 and has provided relief to many plantation and agricultural labourers and to others.

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3.1 The Panchayati Raj and the Challenges of Rural Social Transformation

Ideals of Panchayati Raj

Panchayati Raj translates literally to 'Governance by five individuals'. The idea is to ensure at the village or grass root level a functioning and vibrant democracy. While the idea of grassroot democracy is not an alien import to our country, in a society where there are sharp inequalities, democratic participation is hindered on grounds of gender, caste and class. Furthermore, as you shall see in the newspaper reports later in the chapter, traditionally there have been caste panchayats in villages. But they have usually represented dominant groups. Furthermore, they often held conservative views and often have, and continue to take decisions that go against both democratic norms and procedures.

When the constitution was being drafted, panchayats did not find a mention in it. At this juncture, a number of members expressed their sorrow, anger and disappointment over this issue. At the same time, drawing on his own rural experience, Dr. Ambedkar argued that local elites and upper castes were so well entrenched in society that local self-government only meant a continuing exploitation of the downtrodden masses of Indian society. The upper castes would no doubt silence this segment of the population further. The concept of local government was dear to Gandhiji too. He envisaged each village as a self-sufficient unit conducting its own affairs and saw *gram-swarajya* to be an ideal model to be continued after independence.

Box 3.2

The three-tier system of Panchayati Raj Institution

- The structure is like a pyramid. At the base of the structure stands the unit of democracy or Gram Sabha. This consists of the entire body of citizens in a village or grama. It is this general body that elects the local government and charges it with specific responsibilities. The Gram Sabhas ideally ought to provide an open forum for discussions and village-level development activities and play a crucial role in ensuring inclusion of the weaker sections in the decision-making processes.
- The 73rd Amendment provided a three-tier system of Panchayati Raj for all states having a population of over twenty lakhs.
- It became mandatory that election to these bodies be conducted every five years.
- It provided reservation of seats for the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and thirty three percent seats for women.
- It constituted District Planning Committee to prepare drafts and develop plans for the district as a whole.

It was, however, only in 1992 that grassroot democracy or decentralised governance was ushered in by the 73rd Constitutional Amendment. This act provided constitutional status to the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). It is compulsory now for local self-government bodies in rural and municipal areas to be elected every five years. More importantly, control of local resources is given to the elected local bodies.

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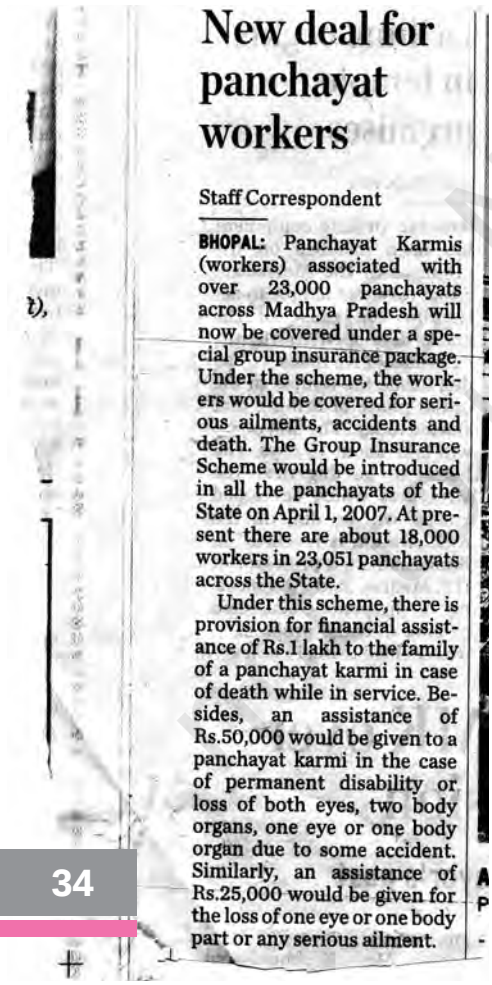
A woman Panch with her reward



New deal for panchayat workers

Staff Correspondent

BHOPAL: Panchayat Karmis (workers) associated with over 23,000 panchayats across Madhya Pradesh will now be covered under a special group insurance package. Under the scheme, the workers would be covered for serious ailments, accidents and death. The Group Insurance Scheme would be introduced in all the panchayats of the State on April 1, 2007. At present there are about 18,000 workers in 23,051 panchayats across the State.

Under this scheme, there is provision for financial assistance of Rs.1 lakh to the family of a panchayat karmi in case of death while in service. Besides, an assistance of Rs.50,000 would be given to a panchayat karmi in the case of permanent disability or loss of both eyes, two body organs, one eye or one body organ due to some accident. Similarly, an assistance of Rs.25,000 would be given for the loss of one eye or one body part or any serious ailment.

The 73rd and 74th amendments to the Constitution ensured the reservation of one third of the total seats for women in all elected offices of local bodies in both the rural and urban areas. Out of this, 17 per cent seats are reserved for women belonging to the scheduled castes and tribes. This amendment is significant as for the first time it brought women into elected bodies which also bestowed on them decision making powers. One third of the seats in local bodies, gram panchayats, village panchayats, municipalities, city corporations and district boards are reserved for women. The 1993–94 elections, soon after the 73rd amendment brought in 800,000 women into the political processes in a single election. That was a big step indeed in enfranchising women. A constitutional amendment prescribed a three-tier system of local self-governance (read Box 3.7 on the last page) for the entire country, effective since 1992–93.

Powers and Responsibilities of Panchayats

According to the Constitution, Panchayats should be given powers and authority to function as institutions of self-government. It, thus, requires all state governments to revitalise local representative institutions.

The following powers and responsibility were delegated to the Panchayats:

- to prepare plans and schemes for economic development
- to promote schemes that will enhance social justice
- to levy, collect and appropriate taxes, duties, tolls and fees
- help in the devolution of governmental responsibilities, especially that of finances to local authorities

Social welfare responsibilities of the Panchayats include the maintenance of burning and burial grounds, recording statistics of births and deaths, establishment of child welfare and maternity centres, control of cattle pounds, propagation of family planning and promotion of agricultural activities. The development activities include the construction of roads, public buildings, wells, tanks and schools. They also promote small cottage industries and take care of minor irrigation works. Many

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Panchayati Raj Ministry prepares software to aid transfer of funds

Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI: The Union Panchayati Raj Ministry has prepared a software to maintain databases of bank accounts of all Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) to facilitate the transfer of funds through banking channels, preferably electronically.

Once the data is entered, money can be transferred directly to the 2,40,000 PRIs from the State's Consolidate Fund.

Karnataka has already implemented this system, using the fast expanding electronic network of banks to transfer funds from the State treasury to individual panchayats.

Here, the State Government sends 12th Finance Commission funds and its own untied statutory grant to all panchayats directly from the State Department of Panchayati Raj through banks without any intermediary.

The arrangement involves six nationalised and 12 gramin banks, in which all 5,800 panchayats at all levels hold accounts.

This has reduced the time taken for funds to reach each panchayat from two months to 12 days.

The Ministry of Finance has indicated its willingness to work with the Panchayati Raj Ministry towards developing a consensus on adoption of this tool kit, across Central ministries and State Governments.

The 12th Finance Commission has recommend that a sum of Rs. 20,000 be made available as grants to the State Governments between 2005-2010 to augment the Consolidated Fund at State level to facilitate the supplementing of the financial resources placed at the disposal of the panchayats.

The Union Finance Ministry has also mandated that these funds must invariably be transferred to panchayats within 15 days of their being credited to State Consolidated Fund.

The Finance Ministry guidelines also make it clear that grants will not be released to a State where elections to the panchayats have not been held, each State Finance Secretary would be required to provide a certificate within 15 days of the release of each instalment by the Government certifying the dates and amounts of local grants received by the State from the Government, and the dates and amounts of grants released by the State to the PRIs.

In the case of delayed transfer to the PRIs from the State, an amount of interest at the rate equal to the Reserve Bank of India rate has to be additionally paid by the State to the PRIs, for the period of delay.

government schemes like the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) and Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) are monitored by members of the panchayat.

The main income of the Panchayats is from tax levied on property, profession, animals, vehicles, cess on land revenue and rentals. The resources are further increased by the grants received through the Zilla Panchayat. It is also considered compulsory for Panchayat offices to put up boards outside their offices, listing the break up of funds received, and utilisation of the financial aid received. This exercise was taken up to ensure that people at the grassroot level should have the 'right to information' – opening all functioning to the public eye. People had the right to scrutinise allocation of money. And ask reasons for decisions that were taken for the welfare and development activities of the village.

Nyaya Panchayats have been constituted in some states. They possess the authority to hear some petty, civil and criminal cases. They can impose fines but cannot award a sentence. These village courts have often been successful in bringing about an agreement amongst contending parties. They have been particularly effective in punishing men who harass women for dowry and perpetrate violence against them.

Panchayati Raj in Tribal Areas

Box 3.3

Kalavati, a Dalit by caste was apprehensive about standing for elections. She is a Panchayat member and realises that her confidence and self-esteem has grown ever since she became a member of the panchayat. Most importantly 'she has a name'. Before she became a member of the panchayat she was only called as 'Ramu's mother' or 'Hiralal's wife'. If she lost the election for the post of the Pradhan she felt *'sakhiyan ki nak kat jaye'* (her friends would lose face).

Source: This was recorded by Mahila Samakhya, an NGO working towards Rural Women's Empowerment.

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Box 3.4

Van Panchayats

In Uttarakhand, women do most of the work since men are often posted far away in defence services. Most of the villagers are still dependent on firewood for cooking. As you may know, deforestation is a big problem in the mountainous regions. Women sometimes walk many miles to collect firewood and fodder for their animals. To overcome this problem, women have set up *van*-panchayats. Members of the *van*-panchayats develop nurseries and nurture tree saplings for planting on the hill slopes. Members also police nearby forests to keep an eye on illegal felling of trees. The Chipko movement, where women hugged trees to prevent them from being cut, had its beginnings in this area.

Box 3.5

Panchayati Raj training for illiterate women

Innovative modes of communicating the strength of the Panchyat Raj system

The story of two villages, Sukhipur and Dhukipur are unravelled through a cloth '*phad*' or a scroll (a traditional folk medium of story telling). Village Dhukipur (sad village) has a corrupt Pradhan (Bimla), who has spent the money received from the panchayat for building a school, on constructing a house for herself and her family. The rest of the villagers are sad and poor. On the other hand, Sukhipur (happy village) has a content populace as the Pradhan (Najma) has invested rural reconstruction money in developing good infrastructure for her village. Here the primary health centre is functioning, it has a 'pucca' building and also has a good road so that buses can reach the village.

Pictorial pictures on the '*phad*', accompanied with folk music were useful tools to convey the message for able governance and participation. This innovative method of story telling was very effective in bringing awareness to unlettered women. Most importantly the campaign conveyed the message, that it was not enough to merely vote, or to stand for election, or to win. But important to know why is one voting for a particular person, what are the traits to look for, and what does he or she stand for .The value for integrity is also emphasised through the story and song media of the '*phad*'.

This training programme was conducted by Mahila Samakhya, an NGO working towards Rural Women's Empowerment.

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Many tribal areas have had a rich tradition of grassroot democratic functioning. We give an illustrative example from Meghalaya. All the three major ethnic tribal groups, namely, the Khasis, Jaintias and the Garos have their own traditional political institutions that have existed for hundreds of years. These political institutions were fairly well-developed and functioned at various tiers, such as the village level, clan level and state level. For instance, in the traditional political system of the Khasis, each clan had its own council known as the 'Durbar Kur', which was presided over by the clan headman. Though there is a long tradition of grassroot political institutions in Meghalaya, a large chunk of tribal areas lie outside the provisions of the 73rd Amendment. This may be because the concerned policymakers did not wish to interfere with the traditional tribal institutions.

However, as sociologist Tiplut Nongbri remarks that tribal institutions in themselves need not necessarily be democratic in its structure and functioning. Commenting on the Bhuria Committee Report that went into this issue, Nongbri remarks that while the Committee's concern for the traditional tribal institutions is appreciable, it fails to take stock of the complexity of the situation. For notwithstanding the strong egalitarian ethos that characterised tribal societies, the element of stratification is not altogether absent. Tribal political institutions are not only marked by open intolerance to women but the process of social change has also introduced sharp distortions in the system, making it difficult to identify which is traditional and which is not (Nongbri 2003: 220). This again brings you back to the changing nature of tradition that we discussed in Chapters 1 and 2.

Democratisation and Inequality

It will be clear to you that democratisation is not easy in a society that has had a long history of inequality based on caste, community and gender. You have dealt with the different kinds of inequality in the earlier book. In Chapter 4 you will get a fuller sense of rural Indian structure. Given this unequal and undemocratic social structure, it is not surprising that in many cases, certain members belonging to particular groups, communities, castes of the village are not included or informed about meetings and activities of the village. The Gram Sabha members are often controlled by a small coterie of rich landlords usually hailing from the upper castes or landed peasantry. They make decisions on development activities, allocate funds, leaving the silent majority as mere onlookers.

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3.2 Political Parties, Pressure and Interest Groups in Democratic Politics

A look at the newspaper every morning will show you many instances where different groups seek to make their voices heard. And draw the attention of the government to their grievances.

Industrialists form associations such as Federation of Indian Chambers and Commerce (FICCI) and Association of Chambers of Commerce (ASSOCHAM). Workers form trade unions such as the Indian Trade Union Congress (INTUC) or the Centre for Indian Trade Unions (CITU). Farmers form agricultural unions such as Shetkari Sangathan. Agricultural labourers have their own unions. You will read about other kinds of organisations and social movements like tribal and environmental movements in the last chapter.

Activity 3.1

- Follow any one newspaper or magazine for a week. Note down the many instances where there is a clash of interests.
- Identify the issue over which the dispute occurs.
- Identify the way the groups concerned take up their cause.
- Is it a formal delegation of a political party to meet the Prime Minister or any other functionary?
- Is it a protest on the streets?
- Is it through writing or providing information in newspapers?
- Is it through public meetings?
- Identify the instances whether a political party, a professional association, a non governmental organisation or any other body takes up an issue.

In a democratic form of government political parties are key actors. A political party may be defined as an organisation oriented towards achieving legitimate control of government through an electoral process. Political Party is an organisation established with the aim of achieving governmental power and using that power to pursue a specific programme. Political parties are based on certain understanding of society and how it ought to be. In a democratic system the interests of different groups are also represented by political parties, who take up their case. Different interest groups will work towards influencing political parties. When certain groups feel that their interests are not being taken up, they may move to form an alternative party. Or they form pressure groups who lobby with the government. Interest Groups are organised to pursue specific interests in the political arena, operating primarily by lobbying the members of legislative bodies. In some situations, there may be political organisations which seek to achieve power but are denied the opportunity to do so through standard means. These organisations are best regarded as movements until they achieve recognition.

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Box 3.6

Every year in February the Finance Minister of the Government of India presents the Budget to the Parliament. Prior to this there are reports every day in the newspaper of the meetings that the various confederation of Indian industrialists, of trade unions, farmers, and more recently womens' groups had with the Ministry of Finance.

It is obvious that all groups will not have the same access or the same ability to pressurise the government. Some, therefore, argue that the concept of pressure groups underestimate the power that dominant social groups such as class, caste or gender have in society. They feel that it would be more accurate to suggest that dominant class or classes control the state. This does not negate the fact that social movements and pressure groups also continue to play a very important role in a democracy. Chapter 8 shows this.

Box 3.7

Max Weber on Parties

Whereas the genuine place of classes is within the economic order, the place of status groups is within the social order…But parties live in a house of power… Party actions are always directed towards a goal which is striven for in a planned manner. The goal may be a 'cause' (the party may aim at realising a program for ideal or material purposes), or the goal may be 'personal' (sinecures, power, and from these, honour for the leader and followers of the party).

(Weber 1948: 194)

Questions

1. Have you heard of Bal Panchayats and Mazdoor Kissan Sanghathan? If not, find out and write a note about them in about 200 words.
2. The 73rd amendment has been monumental in bringing a voice to the people in the villages. Discuss.
3. Write an essay on the ways that the Indian Constitution touches peoples' everyday life, drawing upon different examples.
4. What is the significance of political parties in a democracy?
5. How are pressure groups formed?
6. What is the role of interest groups in a democratic system?

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4 Change and Development in Rural Society

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Indian society is primarily a rural society though urbanisation is growing. The majority of India's people live in rural areas (69 per cent, according to the 2011 Census). They make their living from agriculture or related occupations. This means that agricultural land is the most important productive resource for a great many Indians. Land is also the most important form of property. But land is not just a 'means of production' nor just a 'form of property'. Nor is agriculture just a form of livelihood. It is also a way of life. Many of our cultural practices and patterns can be traced to our agrarian backgrounds. You will recall from the earlier chapters how closely interrelated structural and cultural changes are. For example, most of the New Year festivals in different regions of India – such as Pongal in Tamil Nadu, Bihu in Assam, Baisakhi in Punjab and Ugadi in Karnataka to name just a few – actually celebrate the main harvest season and herald the beginning of a new agricultural season. Find out about other harvest festivals.

Different means of agriculture and related festivals.

There is a close connection between agriculture and culture. The nature and practice of agriculture varies greatly across the different regions of the country. These variations are reflected in the different regional cultures. One can say that both the culture and social structure in rural India are closely bound up with agricultural and the agrarian way of life.

Agriculture is the single most important source of livelihood for the majority of the rural population. But the rural is not just agriculture. Many activities that support agriculture and village life are also sources of livelihood for people in rural India. For example, a large number of artisans such as potters, carpenters, weavers, ironsmiths, and goldsmiths are found in rural areas. They were once part and parcel of the village economy. Their numbers have been steadily lessening since the colonial period. You have already read in Chapter 1 how the influx of manufactured goods replaced hand-made products.

Rural life also supported many other specialists and craftspersons as story-tellers, astrologers, priests, water-distributors and oil-pressers. The

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diversity of occupations in rural India was reflected in the caste system, which in most regions included specialist and 'service' castes such as Dry Cleaners, Potters and Goldsmiths. Some of these traditional occupations have declined. But increasing interconnection of the rural and urban economies have led to many diverse occupations. Many people living in rural areas are employed in, or have livelihoods based on rural non-farm activities. For instance, there are rural residents employed in government services such as the Postal and Education Departments, factory workers, or in the army, who earn their living through non-agricultural activities.

Activity 4.1

- Think of an important festival that is celebrated in your region that has its roots in agrarian society. What is the significance of the various practices or rituals that are associated with that festival, and how are they linked to agriculture?
- Most towns and cities in India have grown and encompassed surrounding villages. Can you identify an area of the city or town where you live that used to be a village, or areas that were once agricultural land? How do you think this growth takes place, and what happens to the people who used to make a living from that land?

The Diversity of Occupations

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4.1 Agrarian Structure: Caste and Class in Rural India

Agricultural land is the single most important resource and form of property in rural society. But it is not equally distributed among people living in a particular village or region. Nor does everyone have access to land. In fact, the distribution of landholdings in most regions is highly unequal among households. In some parts of India, the majority of rural households own at least some land – usually very small plots. In other areas as much as 40 to 50 per cent of families do not own any land at all. This means that they are dependent on agricultural labour or other kinds of work for their livelihoods. This of course means that a few families are well-to-do. The majority live just above or below the poverty line.

In most regions of India, women are usually excluded from ownership of land, because of the prevailing patrilineal kinship system and mode of inheritance. By law women are supposed to have an equal share of family property. In reality, they only have limited rights and some access to land — only as part of a household headed by a man.

The term agrarian structure is often used to refer to the structure or distribution of landholding. Because agricultural land is the most important productive resource in rural areas, access to land shapes the rural class structure. Access to land largely determines what role one plays in the process of agricultural production. *Medium and large landowners* are usually able to earn sufficient or even large incomes from cultivation (although this depends on agricultural prices, which can fluctuate greatly, as well as other factors such as the monsoon). But *agricultural labourers* are more often than not paid below the statutory minimum wage and earn very little. Their incomes are low. Their employment is insecure. Most agricultural labourers are daily-wage workers. And do not have work for many days of the year. This is known as underemployment. Similarly, *tenants* (cultivators who lease their land from landowners) have lower incomes than owner-cultivators. Because they have to pay a substantial rent to the landowner – often as much as 50 to 75 per cent of the income from the crop.

Agrarian society, therefore, can be understood in terms of its class structure. But we must also remember the structure is itself through the caste system. In rural areas, there is a complex relationship between caste and class. This relationship is not always straightforward. We might expect that the higher castes have more land and higher incomes. And that there is a correspondence between caste and class as one moves down the hierarchy. In many areas this is broadly true but not exactly. For instance, in most areas the highest caste, the Brahmins, are not major landowners, and so they fall outside the agrarian structure although they are a part of rural society. In most regions of India, the major landowning groups belong to the upper castes. In each region, there are usually just one or two major landowning castes, who are also numerically

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very important. Such groups were termed by the sociologist M.N. Srinivas as dominant castes. In each region, the dominant caste is the most powerful group, economically and politically, and dominates local society. Examples of dominant landowning groups are the Jats and Rajputs of U.P., the Vokkaligas and Lingayats in Karnataka, Kammas and Reddis in Andhra Pradesh, and Jat Sikhs in Punjab.

While dominant landowning groups are usually middle or high ranked castes, most of the marginal farmers and landless belong to lower caste groups. In official classification they belong to the Scheduled Castes or Tribes (SC/STs) or Other Backward Classes (OBCs). In many regions of India, the former 'Untouchable' or *dalit* castes were not allowed to own land and they provided most of the agricultural labour for the dominant landowning groups. This also created a labour force that allowed the landowners to cultivate the land intensively and get higher returns.

Box 4.1

There is a direct correspondence between agricultural productivity and the agrarian structure. In areas of assured irrigation, those with plentiful rainfall or artificial irrigation works (such as rice-growing regions in river deltas, for instance the Kaveri basin in Tamil Nadu) more labour was needed for intensive cultivation. Here the most unequal agrarian structures developed. The agrarian structure of these regions was characterised by a large proportion of landless labourers, who were often 'bonded' workers belonging to the lowest castes. (Kumar 1998).

The rough correspondence between caste and class means that typically the upper and middle castes also had the best access to land and resources, and hence to power and privilege. This had important implications for the rural economy and society. In most regions of the country, a 'proprietary caste' group owns most of the resources and can command labour to work for them. Until recently, practices such as *begar* or free labour were prevalent in many parts of northern India. Members of low ranked caste groups had to provide labour for a fixed number of days per year to the village *zamindar* or landlord. Many of the working poor were tied to landowners in 'hereditary' labour relationships. Although such practices have been abolished legally, they continue to exist in many areas.

Activity 4.2

- Think about what you have learned about the caste system. Outline the various linkages between the agrarian or rural class structure and caste. Discuss in terms of different access to resources, labour and occupation.

4.2 The Impact of Land Reforms

The Colonial Period

There are historical reasons why each region of India came to be dominated by just one or two major groups. But it is important to realise that this agrarian structure has changed enormously over time, from the pre-colonial to the

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colonial and after independence. While the same dominant castes were probably also cultivating castes in the pre-colonial period, they were not the direct owners of land. Instead, ruling groups such as the local kings or zamindars (landlords who were also politically powerful in their areas, and usually belonged to Kshatriya or other high castes) controlled the land. The peasants or cultivators who worked the land had to handover a substantial portion of the produce to them. When the British colonised India, in many areas they ruled through these local zamindars. They also granted property rights to the zamindars. Under the British, the zamindars were given more control over land than they had before. Since the colonisers also imposed heavy land revenue (taxes) on agriculture, the zamindars extracted as much produce or money as they could out of the cultivators. One result of this zamindari system was that agricultural production stagnated or declined during much of the period of British rule. For peasants fled from oppressive landlords and frequent famines and wars decimated the population.

Many districts of colonial India were administered through the zamindari system. In other areas that were under direct British rule had what was called the *raiyatwari* system of land settlement (*raiyat* means cultivator in Telugu). In this system, the 'actual cultivators' (who were themselves often landlords and not cultivators) rather than the zamindars were responsible for paying the tax. Because the colonial government dealt directly with the farmers or landlords, rather than through the overlords, the burden of taxation was less and cultivators had more incentive to invest in agriculture. As a result, these areas became relatively more productive and prosperous.

This background about land revenue administration in colonial India – much of which you have learned in your history books – is important to keep in mind when studying the agrarian structure of present-day India. This is because it is through a series of changes starting in this period that the current structure evolved.

Independent India

After India became independent, Nehru and his policy advisors embarked on a programme of planned development that focused on agrarian reform as well as industrialisation. The policymakers were responding to the dismal agricultural situation in India at that time. This was marked by low productivity, dependence on imported food grains, and the intense poverty of a large section of the rural population. They felt that a major reform in the agrarian structure, and especially in the landholding system and the distribution of land, was necessary if agriculture were to progress. From the 1950s to the 1970s, a series of land reform laws were passed – at the national level as well as in the states – that were intended to bring about these changes.

The first important legislation was the abolition of the zamindari system, which removed the layer of intermediaries who stood between the cultivators and the state. Of all the land reform laws that were passed, this was probably

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the most effective, for in most areas it succeeded in taking away the superior rights of the zamindars over the land and weakening their economic and political power. This did not happen without a struggle, of course, but ultimately the effect was to strengthen the position of the actual landholders and cultivators at the local level.

Among the other major land reform laws that were introduced were the tenancy abolition and regulation acts. They attempted either to outlaw tenancy altogether or to regulate rents to give some security to the tenants. In most of the states, these laws were never implemented very effectively. In West Bengal and Kerala, there was a radical restructuring of the agrarian structure that gave land rights to the tenants.

ACTIVITY 4.3

Find out about the Bhoodan movement

The third major category of land reform laws were the *Land Ceiling Acts*. These laws imposed an upper limit on the amount of land that can be owned by a particular family. The ceiling varies from region to region, depending on the kind of land, its productivity, and other such factors. Very productive land has a low ceiling while unproductive dry land has a higher ceiling limit. According to these acts, the state is supposed to identify and take possession of surplus land (above the ceiling limit) held by each household, and redistribute it to landless families and households in other specified categories, such as SCs and STs. But in most of the states these acts proved to be toothless. There were many loopholes and other strategies through which most landowners were able to escape from having their surplus land taken over by the state. In some places, some rich farmers actually divorced their wives (but continued to live with them) in order to avoid the provisions of the Land Ceiling Act, which allowed a separate share for unmarried women but not for wives. These were also called '*benami* transfers'.

The agrarian structure varies greatly across India, and the progress of land reforms has also been uneven across the states. On the whole, however, it can be said that the agrarian structure, although it has changed substantially from colonial times to the present, remains highly unequal. This structure puts constraints on agricultural productivity. Land reforms are necessary not only to boost agricultural growth but also to eradicate poverty in rural areas and bring about social justice.

4.3 The Green Revolution and its Social Consequences

We saw that land reforms have had only a limited impact on rural society and the agrarian structure in most regions. In contrast the Green Revolution of the 1960s and 1970s brought about significant changes in the areas where it took place. The Green Revolution, as you know, was a government programme

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of agricultural modernisation. It was largely funded by international agencies that was based on providing high-yielding variety(HYV) or hybrid seeds along with pesticides, fertilisers, and other inputs, to farmers. Green Revolution programmes were introduced only in areas that had assured irrigation, because sufficient water was necessary for the new seeds and methods of cultivation. It was also targeted mainly at the wheat and rice-growing areas. As a result, only certain regions such as the Punjab, western U.P., coastal Andhra Pradesh, and parts of Tamil Nadu, received the first wave of the Green Revolution package. The rapid social and economic transformations that were seen in these areas stimulated a spate of studies by social scientists, and vigorous debates about the impact of the Green Revolution.

Agricultural productivity increased sharply because of the new technology. India was able to become self-sufficient in foodgrain production for the first time in decades. The Green Revolution has been considered a major achievement of the government and of the scientists who contributed to the effort. However, there were certain negative social effects that were pointed out by sociologists who studied the Green Revolution areas, as well as adverse environmental impacts.

In most of the Green Revolution areas, *it was primarily the medium and large farmers who were able to benefit from the new technology*. This was because inputs were expensive, and small and marginal farmers could not afford to spend as much as large farmers to purchase these inputs. When agriculturists produce primarily for themselves and are unable to produce for the market, it is known as 'subsistence agriculture' and they are usually termed 'peasants'. Agriculturists or farmers are those who are able to produce surplus, over and above the needs of the family, and so are linked to the market. It was *the farmers who were able to produce a surplus for the market who were able to reap the most benefits* from the Green Revolution and from the commercialisation of agriculture that followed.

Thus, in the first phase of the Green Revolution, in the 1960s and 1970s, the introduction of new technology seemed to be *increasing inequalities in rural society*. Green Revolution crops were highly profitable, mainly because they yielded more produce. Well-to-do farmers who had access to land, capital, technology, and know-how, and those who could invest in the new seeds and fertilisers, could increase their production and earn more money. However, in many cases it led to the displacement of tenant-cultivators. For landowners began to take back land from their tenants and cultivate it directly because cultivation was becoming more profitable. This made the rich farmers better off, and worsened the condition of the landless and marginal holders.

In addition, the introduction of machinery such as tillers, tractors, threshers, and harvesters (in areas such as Punjab and parts of Madhya Pradesh) led to *the displacement of the service caste groups* who used to carry out these agriculture-related activities. This process of displacement also increased the pace of rural-urban migration.

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The ultimate outcome of the Green Revolution was a process of 'differentiation', in which the rich grew richer and many of the poor stagnated or grew poorer. It should be noted *that employment and wages for agricultural workers did increase in many areas, because the demand for labour increased.* Moreover, rising prices and a shift in the mode of payment of agricultural workers from payment in kind (grain) to cash, actually worsened the economic condition of most rural workers.

The second phase of the Green Revolution which began in 1980s, farmers living in the dry and semi-arid regions of India began following Green Revolution cultivation practices. In these areas there has been a significant shift from dry to wet (irrigated) cultivation, along with changes in the cropping pattern and type of crops grown. Increasing commercialisation and dependence on the market in these areas (for instance, where cotton cultivation has been promoted) has increased rather than reduced livelihood insecurity, as farmers who once grew food for consumption now depend on the market for the incomes. *In market-oriented cultivation, especially where a single crop is grown, a fall in prices or a bad crop can spell financial ruin for farmers.* In most of the Green Revolution areas, farmers have switched from a multi-crop system, which allowed them to spread risks, to a mono-crop regime, which means that there is nothing to fall back on in case of crop failure.

Another negative outcome of the Green Revolution strategy was *the worsening of regional inequalities.* The areas that underwent this technological transformation became more developed while other areas stagnated. For instance, the Green Revolution was promoted more in the western and southern parts of the country, and in Punjab, Haryana, and western U.P., than in the eastern parts of the country (Das, 1999). There are regions that continue to have an entrenched 'feudal' agrarian structure, in which the landed castes and landlords maintain power over the lower castes, landless workers and small cultivators. The sharp caste and class inequalities, together with exploitative labour relations, in these regions has *given rise to various kinds of violence* (including inter-caste violence) in recent years.

Box 4.2

Local commentary increasingly contrasts the *sampurna* (wholeness) of the organic produce with that of the hybrid produce. An elderly woman, Bhargawa Hugar, in the village of Madbhavi, said:

What…they used to grow some wheat, red sorghum…plant a few tubers, chilli plants… cotton. Now there's only *hibrad* (hybrid)…where's the *javari* (organic/local)? Hybrid seeds…hybrid crops…even the children are hybrid. Hybrid seeds are sown on the earth…the children born are also hybrid. *(Vasavi 1994: 295–96)*

Often it is thought that imparting knowledge of 'scientific' farming methods will improve the conditions of Indian farmers. We should remember that Indian farmers have been cultivating the land for centuries, much before the advent of the Green Revolution. They have very deep and extensive traditional knowledge about the land they till and the crops they sow. Much of this knowledge, like the many traditional varieties of seeds that were developed over the centuries by farmers, is being lost as hybrid, high-yielding, and genetically

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modified varieties of seeds are being promoted as more productive and 'scientific' (Gupta 1998; Vasavi 1999b). In view of the negative environmental and social impact of modern methods of cultivation that have been observed, a number of scientists as well as farmers' movements now suggest a return to traditional, more organic seeds and methods of cultivation. Many rural people themselves believe that hybrid varieties are less healthy than the traditional ones.

4.4 Transformations in Rural Society after Independence

Several profound transformations in the nature of social relations in rural areas took place in the post-Independence period, especially in those regions that underwent the Green Revolution. These included:

- an increase in the use of agricultural labour as cultivation became more intensive;
- a shift from payment in kind (grain) to payment in cash;
- a loosening of traditional bonds or hereditary relationships between farmers or landowners and agricultural workers (known as bonded labour) and
- the rise of a class of 'free' wage labourers.

The change in the nature of the relationship between landlords (who usually belonged to the dominant castes) and agricultural workers (usually low caste), was described by the sociologist Jan Breman as a shift from 'patronage to exploitation' (Breman, 1974). Such changes took place in many areas where agriculture was becoming more commercialised, that is, where crops were being grown primarily for sale in the market. The transformation in labour relations is regarded by some scholars as indicative of a transition to capitalist agriculture. Because the capitalist mode of production is based on the separation of the workers from the means of production (in this case, land), and the use of 'free' wage labour. In general, it is true that farmers in the more developed regions were becoming more oriented to the market. As cultivation became more commercialised, these rural areas were also becoming integrated to the wider

Cultivation in different parts of the country

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economy. This process increased the flow of money into villages and expanding opportunities for business and employment. But we should remember that this process of transformation in the rural economy, in fact, began during the Colonial period. In many regions in the 19th century, large tracts of land in Maharashtra were given over to cotton cultivation, and cotton farmers became directly linked to the world market. However, the pace and spread of change rapidly increased after Independence, as the government promoted modern methods of cultivation and attempted to modernise the rural economy through other strategies. The state invested in the development of rural infrastructure, such as irrigation facilities, roads and electricity, and on the provision of agricultural inputs, including credit through banks and cooperatives. For regular agricultural growth, uninterupted power supply to rural India is one of the necessities. The 'Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojna' launched in 2014 is a laudable effort of the government of India in this direction. The overall outcome of these efforts at 'rural development' was not only to transform the rural economy and agriculture, but also the agrarian structure and the rural society itself.

Changing technologies in agriculture

One way in which rural social structure was altered by agricultural development since the 1960s was through the enrichment of the medium and large farmers who adopted the new technologies, discussed in the previous section. In several agriculturally rich regions, such as coastal Andhra Pradesh, western Uttar Pradesh, and central Gujarat, well-to-do farmers belonging to the dominant castes began to invest their profits from agriculture in other types of business ventures. This process of diversification gave rise to new entrepreneurial groups that moved out of rural areas and into the growing towns of these developing regions, giving rise to new regional elites that became economically as well as politically dominant (Rutten 1995). Along with this change in the class structure, the spread of higher education, especially private professional colleges, in rural and semi-urban areas, allowed the new rural elites to educate their children – many of whom then joined professional or white collar occupations or started businesses, feeding into the expansion of the urban middle classes.

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Thus, in areas of rapid agricultural development there has been a consolidation of the old landed or cultivating groups, who have transformed themselves into a dynamic entrepreneurial, rural-urban dominant class. But in other regions such as eastern U.P. and Bihar, the lack of effective land reforms, political mobilisation, and redistributive measures has meant that there have been relatively few changes in the agrarian structure and hence in the life conditions of most people. In contrast, states such as Kerala have undergone a different process of development, in which political mobilisation, redistributive measures, and linkages to an external economy (primarily the Gulf countries) have brought about a substantial transformation of the rural countryside. Far from the rural being primarily agrarian, the rural in Kerala is a mixed economy that integrates some agriculture with a wide network of retail sales and services, and where a large number of families are dependent on remittances from abroad.

Look at this house 'Sukrutham' in a village in Kerala. It is located in Yakkar Village, 3 kilometres from Palakkad district town

4.5 Circulation of Labour

Another significant change in rural society that is linked to the commercialisation of agriculture has been the growth of migrant agricultural labour. As 'traditional' bonds of patronage between labourers or tenants and landlords broke down, and as the seasonal demand for agricultural labour increased in prosperous Green Revolution regions such as the Punjab, a pattern of seasonal migration emerged in which thousands of workers circulate between their home villages and more prosperous areas where there is more demand for labour and higher wages. Labourers migrate also due to the increasing inequalities in rural areas from the mid-1990s, which have forced many households to combine multiple occupations to sustain themselves. As a livelihood strategy, men migrate out periodically in search of work and better wages, while women and children are often left behind in their villages with elderly grandparents. Migrant workers come mainly from drought-prone and less productive regions, and they go to work for part of the year on farms in Punjab and Haryana, or on brick kilns

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in U.P., or construction sites in cities such as New Delhi or Bangalore. These migrant workers have been termed 'footloose labour' by Jan Breman, but this does not imply freedom. Breman's (1985) study shows, to the contrary, that landless workers do not have many rights, for instance, they are usually not paid the minimum wage. It should be noted here that wealthy farmers often prefer to employ migrant workers for harvesting and other such intensive operations, rather than the local working class, because migrants are more easily exploited and can be paid lower wages. This preference has produced a peculiar pattern in some areas where the local landless labourers move out of the home villages in search of work during the peak agricultural seasons, while migrant workers are brought in from other areas to work on the local farms. This pattern is found especially in sugarcane growing areas. Migration and lack of job security have created very poor working and living conditions for these workers.

The large scale circulation of labour has had several significant effects on rural society, in both the receiving and the supplying regions. For instance, in poor areas where male family members spend much of the year working outside of their villages, cultivation has become primarily a female task. Women are also emerging as the main source of agricultural labour, leading to the 'feminisation of agricultural labour force.' The insecurity of women is greater because they earn lower wages than men for similar work. Until recently, women were hardly visible in official statistics as earners and workers. While women toil on the land as landless labourers and as cultivators, the prevailing patrilineal kinship system, and other cultural practices that privilege male rights, largely exclude women from land ownership.

4.6 Globalisation, Liberalisation, and Rural Society

The policy of liberalisation that India has been following since the late 1980s have had a very significant impact on agriculture and rural society. The policy entails participation in the World Trade Organization (WTO), which aims to bring about a more free international trading system and requires the opening up of Indian markets to imports. After decades of state support and protected markets, Indian farmers have been exposed to competition from the global market. For instance, we have all seen imported fruits and other food items on the shelves of our local stores – items that were not available a few years ago because of import substitution policies. Recently, India has also decided to import wheat, a controversial decision that reverses the earlier policy of self-reliance on food grains. And bring back bitter memories of dependency on American food grains in the early years after Independence.

These are indicators of the process of globalisation of agriculture, or the incorporation of agriculture into the larger global market – a process that has

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LETTER FROM MANSURPUR

In western UP, sugarcane is life

Avijit Ghosh | TNN

Mansurpur (UP): It's early morning. And a bunch of anarchic lorries and tractors swollen with sugarcane are already holding up the traffic on NH 58. A little ahead, a posse of bullock carts in similar condition has formed a hydra-headed queue before a sugar mill in this dusty kasba. It will be hours before the yield is delivered.

Outside, Raj Kumar Tyagi of Mubarakpur village sits by his tractor unmindful of asthmatic dust hanging thick in the air. "We are used to waiting," he says, "That's what a crop like sugarcane that takes almost a year to mature teaches farmers."

The wait, from all accounts, has been worth it. "This year, the quality and quantity is good," says Vipin Tyagi, manager (cane), Uttam Sugar Mills. The state government hasn't announced the year's procurement price yet. But the cheery mood flows from a rustic wisdom that former pradhan of Tughluqpur village, Om Singh, typifies. He says, "With UP assembly elections due early next year, farmers believe chief minister Mulayam Singh Yadav will declare a high procurement rate just like wheat." Farmer-friendly organisations have been issuing press statements to keep the pressure. Last year, cane farmers earned around Rs 130-135 per quintal. This year, they hope to fetch at least Rs 150 per quintal.

But the long, jointed fibrous stalk isn't just the region's primary crop. In these parts, sugarcane is synonymous with life. It's not only the spine of the local economy; it's also the soul of its social calendar. The quantum of production and its price decides both marriage spending and motorcycle sales. The crop acts as a guarantee for farmers in need of loans. In these badlands, where kidnapping is a cottage industry, it means a lot for criminals too.

"Before the harvest, kidnappers hide their victims in tall sugarcane fields. After the crop is reaped, the venue shifts elsewhere," says Amarendra Sengar, SP Muzaffarnagar district. "But unlike Punjab, where festivals like Lohri are linked to wheat harvesting, no such celebrations are associated with sugarcane," says Muzaffarnagar-based psychologist Sanjay Singh.

Statistics show UP contributes about 44% of India's total cane production. About 2.25 million hectares is under sugarcane cultivation. In 2005-06, the state produced around 135 million tonnes of the crop.

And western UP is cane heartland. As Pervez Garg of Mansurpur Traders Association puts it succinctly, "Everything we do or don't do is linked to sugarcane." Sari sales in his shop rise by 30% during the harvest season. Mobile phone retailer Sudesh Kumar sells three phones on an average during the off-season but the harvest months (November to March), sees sales move north to six phones a day. "Sometimes, the number is as high as nine," he informs. But for a liquor seller in Khatauli kasba, the season has a different meaning. "To me, it means the end of the beer and the beginning of whisky season," he says.

▶ Delays irk farmers, P 19

Guest Editor's CHOICE

BUMPER CROP: Sales of consumer goods like bikes and mobiles surge during the harvest months in rural parts of western UP

Retail in rural areas

had direct effects on farmers and rural society. For instance, in some regions such as Punjab and Karnataka, farmers enter into contracts with multinational companies (such as PepsiCo) to grow certain crops (such as tomatoes and potatoes), which the companies then buy from them for processing or export. In such 'contract farming' systems, the company identifies the crop to be grown, provides the seeds and other inputs, as well as the know-how and often also the working capital. In return, the farmer is assured of a market because the company guarantees that it will purchase the produce at a predetermined fixed price. Contract farming is very common now in the production of specialised items such as cut flowers, fruits such as grapes, figs and pomegranates, cotton and oilseeds. While contract farming appears to provide financial security to farmers, it can also lead to greater insecurity as farmers become dependent on these companies for their livelihoods. Contract farming of export-oriented products such as flowers and gherkins also means that agricultural land is diverted away from food grain production. Contract farming has sociological significance in that it disengages many people from the production process and makes their own indigenous knowledge of agriculture irrelevant. In addition, contract farming caters primarily to the production of elite items, and because it usually requires high doses of fertilisers and pesticides, it is often not ecologically sustainable.

Farming of flowers

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Box 4.3

Farmers' suicides

The spate of farmers' suicides that has been occurring in different parts of the country since 1997–98 can be linked to the 'agrarian distress' caused by structural changes in agriculture and changes in economic and agricultural policies. These include: the changed pattern of landholdings; changing cropping patterns, especially due to shift to cash crops; liberalisation policies that have exposed Indian agriculture to the forces of globalisation; heavy dependence on high-cost inputs; withdrawal of the State from agricultural extension activities to be replaced by multinational seed and fertiliser companies; decline in state support for agriculture; and individualisation of agricultural operations. According to official statistics, there have been 8,900 suicides by farmers between 2001 and 2006 in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Maharashtra *(Suri 2006:1523)*.

Another, and more widespread aspect of the globalisation of agriculture is the entry of multinationals into this sector as sellers of agricultural inputs such as seeds, pesticides and fertilisers. Over the last decade or so, the government has scaled down its agricultural development programmes, and 'agricultural extension' agents have been replaced in the villages by agents of seed, fertiliser and pesticide companies. These agents are often the sole source of information for farmers about new seeds or cultivation practices, and of course they have an interest in selling their products. This has led to the increased dependence of farmers on expensive fertilisers and pesticides, which has reduced their profits, put many farmers into debt, and also created an ecological crisis in rural areas.

Activity 4.4

Read the newspaper carefully. Listen to the television or radio news. How often are rural areas covered? What kind of issues are usually reported?

Many farmers, who have committed suicide were marginal farmers, who were attempting to increase their productivity, primarily by practising Green Revolution methods. However, undertaking such production meant facing several risks: the cost of production has increased tremendously due to a decrease in agricultural subsidies, the markets are not stable, and many farmers borrow heavily in order to invest in expensive inputs and improve their production.

Suicides of farmers is basically associated with debt, as well as, natural disasters, resulting in the failure of agricutural produce. *Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana, Gram Uday se Bharat Uday Abhiyan, National Urban Mission, National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture and Kisan Credit Card,* etc., are some of the schemes of the Government of India, which may provide unified help to farmers all over the country. These schemes are also helpful in providing quality life to rural India.

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Questions

1. Read the passage given and answer the questions:

   The harsh working conditions suffered by labourers in Aghanbigha were an outcome of the combined effect of the economic power of the maliks as a class and their overwhelming power as members of a dominant caste. A significant aspect of the social power of the maliks was their ability to secure the intervention of various arms of the state to advance their interests. Thus, political factors decisively contributed to widening the gulf between the dominant class and the underclass.

   i. Why do you think the *maliks* were able to use the power of the state to advance their own interests?

   ii. Why did labourers have harsh working conditions?

2. What measures do you think the government has taken, or should take, to protect the rights of landless agricultural labourers and migrant workers?

3. There are direct linkages between the situation of agricultural workers and their lack of upward socio-economic mobility. Name some of them.

4. What are the different factors that have enabled certain groups to transform themselves into new wealthy, entrepreneurial, dominant classes? Can you think of an example of this transformation in your state?

5. Hindi and regional language films were often set in rural areas. Think of a film set in rural India and describe the agrarian society and culture that is shown in it. How realistic do you think the portrayal is? Have you seen any recent film set in rural areas? If not how would you explain it?

6. Visit a construction site in your neighbourhood, a brickyard, or other such place where you are likely to find migrant workers. Find out where the workers come from. How are they recruited from their home villages, who is the '*mukadam*'? If they are from rural areas, find out about their lives in their villages and why they have to migrate to find work.

7. Visit your local fruit-seller, and ask her/him about the fruits she/he sells, where they come from, and their prices. Find out what has happened to the prices of local products after fruits began to be imported from outside of India (such as apples from Australia). Are there any imported fruits cheaper than Indian fruits?

8. Collect information and write a report on the environmental situation in rural India. Examples of topics: pesticides; declining water table; impact of prawn farming in coastal areas; salination of soil and waterlogging in canal irrigated areas; loss of biodiversity. Possible source: *State of India's Environment* Reports, Reports from Centre for Science and Development and the magazine *Down to Earth*.

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Notes

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5 Change and Development in Industrial Society

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Bollywood in Mumbai, Maharashtra may be a place of dreams for you and me, but for many, it is their place of work. Like any industry, the workers there are part of unions. For instance, the dancers, stunt artists and the extras are all part of a junior artists association, whose demands include 8 hours shifts, proper wages and safe working conditions. The products of this industry are advertised and marketed through film distributors and cinema hall owners or through shops in the form of music cassettes and videos. And the people who work in this industry, as in any other, live in the same city, but depending on who they are and how much they earn, they do very different things in that city. Film stars and textile mill owners live in places like Juhu, while extras and textile workers may live in places like Girangaon. Some go to five star hotels and eat Japanese sushi and some eat *vada pav* from the local handcart. The residents of Mumbai are divided by where they live, what they eat and how much their clothes cost. But they are also united by certain common things that a city provides – they watch the same films and cricket matches, they suffer from the same air pollution and they all have aspirations for their children to do well.

How and where people work and what kind of jobs they have is an important part of who they are. In this chapter, we will see how changes in technology or the kind of work that is available has changed social relations in India. On the other hand, social institutions like caste, kinship networks, gender and region also influence the way that work is organised or the way in which products are marketed. This is a major area of research for sociologists.

For instance, why do we find more women in certain jobs like nursing or teaching than in other sectors like engineering? Is this just a coincidence or is it because society thinks that women are suited for caring and nurturing work as against jobs which are seen as 'tough' and masculine? Yet nursing is physically much harder work than designing a bridge. If more women move into engineering, how will that affect the profession? Ask yourself why some coffee advertisements in India display two cups on the package whereas in America they show one cup? The answer is that for many Indians drinking coffee is not an individual wake up activity, but an occasion to socialise with others. Sociologists are interested in the questions of who produces what, who works where, who sells to whom and how. These are not individual choices, but outcomes of social patterns. In turn, the choices that people make influences how society works.

5.1 Images of Industrial Society

Many of the great works of sociology were written at a time when industrialisation was new and machinery was assuming great importance. Thinkers like Karl Marx, Max Weber and Emile Durkheim associated a number of social features with industry, such as urbanisation, the loss of face-to-face relationships that were found in rural areas where people worked on their own farms or

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for a landlord they knew, and their substitution by anonymous professional relationships in modern factories and workplaces. Industrialisation involves a detailed division of labour. People often do not see the end result of their work because they are producing only one small part of a product. The work is often repetitive and exhausting. Yet, even this is better than having no work at all, i.e., being unemployed. Marx called this situation alienation, when people do not enjoy work, and see it as something they have to do only in order to survive, and even that survival depends on whether the technology has room for any human labour.

Industrialisation leads to greater equality, at least in some spheres. For example, caste distinctions do not matter any more on trains, buses or in cyber cafes. On the other hand, older forms of discrimination may persist even in new factory or workplace settings. And even as social inequalities are reducing, economic or income inequality is growing in the world. Often social inequality and income inequality overlap, for example, in the domination of upper caste men in well-paying professions like medicine, law or journalism. Women often get paid less than men for similar work.

ACTIVITY 5.1

According to the convergence thesis put forward by modernisation theorist Clark Kerr, an industrialised India of the 21st century shares more features with China or the United States in the 21st century than it shares with 19th century India. Do you think this is true? Do culture, language and tradition disappear with new technology or does culture influence the way people adapt to new products? Write a page of your own reflections on these issues, giving examples.

5.2 INDUSTRIALISATION IN INDIA

THE SPECIFICITY OF INDIAN INDUSTRIALISATION

The experience of industrialisation in India is in many ways similar to the western model and in many ways different. Comparative analysis of different countries suggests that there is no standard model of industrial capitalism. Let us start with one point of difference, relating to what kind of work people are doing. In developed countries, the majority of people are in the services sector, followed by industry and less than 10% are in agriculture (ILO figures). In India, in 2018–19, nearly 43% were employed in the primary sector (agriculture and mining), 17% in the secondary sector (manufacturing, construction and utilities), and 32% in the tertiary sector (trade, transport, financial services, etc.) However, if we look at the contribution of these sectors to economic growth, the share of agriculture has declined sharply, and services contribute approximately more than half. This is a very serious situation because it means that the sector where the maximum people are employed is not able to generate much income for them. In India, in 2018–19 the share of employment in agriculture was 42.5%, in mining and quarrying 0.4%, in manufacturing it was 12.1%, in trade, hotel and restaurant it was 12.6%, in transport, storage, communication it was 5.9%, in community, social and personal services it was 13.8%.

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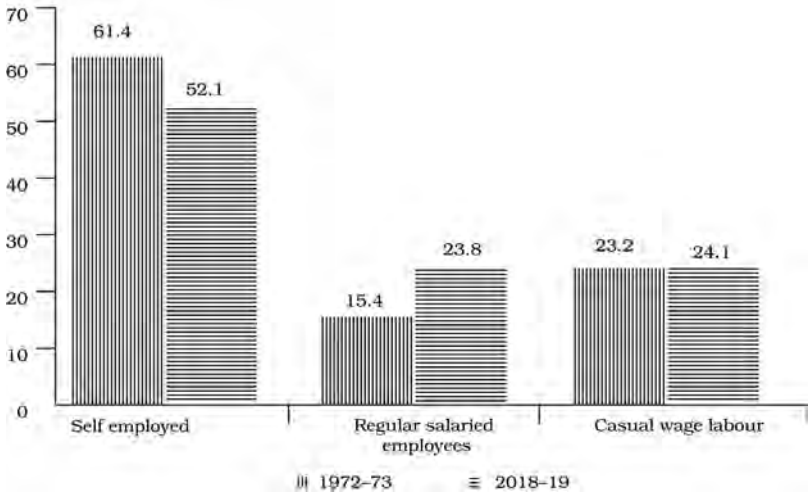
Distribution of workers in India by employment status, 1972–2019



Another major difference between developing and developed countries is the number of people in regular salaried employment. In developed countries, the majority are formally employed. In India, over 52% of the workers are self-employed, only about 24% are in regular salaried employment, while approximately 24% are in casual labour. The adjacent chart shows the changes between 1972–73 and 2018–2019.

Economists and others often make a distinction between the organised or formal and unorganised or informal sector. There is a debate over how to define these sectors. According to one definition, the organised sector consists of all units employing ten or more people throughout the year. These have to be registered with the government to ensure that their employees get proper salaries or wages, pension and other benefits. In India, over 90% of the work, whether it is in agriculture, industry or services is in the unorganised or informal sector. What are the social implications of this small size of the organised sector?

First, it means that very few people have the experience of employment in large firms where they get to meet people from other regions and backgrounds. Urban settings do provide some corrective to this – your neighbours in a city may be from a different place – but by and large, work for most Indians is still in smallscale workplaces. Here personal relationships determine many aspects of work. If the employer likes you, you may get a salary raise, and if you have a fight with him or her, you may lose your job. This is different from a large organisation with well-defined rules, where recruitment is more transparent and there are mechanisms for complaints and redressal if you disagree with your immediate superior. Second, very few Indians have access to secure jobs with benefits. Of those who do, two-thirds work for the government. This is why people strive hard to get into government jobs. The rest are forced to depend on their children in their old age. Government employment in India has played a major role in overcoming boundaries of caste, religion and region. One sociologist has argued that the reason why there have never been communal riots in a place like Bhilai is because the public sector Bhilai Steel Plant employs people from all over India who work together. Others may question this. Third, since very few people are members of unions, a feature of the organised sector, the unorganised or informal sector workers do not have the experience of collectively fighting for proper wages and safe working conditions. The government has laws to monitor conditions in the unorganised sector, but in practice they are left to the whims and fancies of the employer or contractor.

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Globalisation, Liberalisation and Changes in Indian Industry

Since the 1990s, the government has followed a policy of liberalisation. Private companies, especially foreign firms, are encouraged to invest in sectors earlier reserved for the government, including telecom, civil aviation, power, etc. Licenses are no longer required to open industries. Foreign products are now easily available in Indian shops. As a result of liberalisation, many Indian companies—small and large, have been bought over by multinationals. At the same time some Indian companies are becoming multinational companies. An instance of the first is when, Parle drinks was bought by Coca Cola. Parle's annual turnover was ₹ 250 crores, while Coca Cola's advertising budget alone was ₹ 400 crores. This level of advertising has naturally increased the consumption of coke across India replacing many traditional drinks. The next major area of liberalisation is in retail. Do you think that Indians will prefer to shop in grocery stores, small textile shops in your neighbourhood or in small towns, departmental stores, or will they go out of business?

The government is trying to sell its share in several public sector companies, a process which is known as disinvestment. Many government workers are scared that after disinvestment, they will lose their jobs. In 'Modern Foods', which was set up by the government to make healthy bread available at cheap prices, and which was the first company to be privatised, 60% of the workers were forced to retire in the first five years.

More and more companies are reducing the number of permanent employees and outsourcing their work to smaller companies or even to homes. For multinational companies, this outsourcing is done across the globe, with developing countries like India providing cheap labour. Because small companies have to compete for orders from the big companies, they keep wages low, and working conditions are often poor. It is more difficult for trade unions to organise in smaller firms. Almost all companies, even government ones, now practice some form of outsourcing and contracting. But the trend is especially visible in the private sector.

To summarise, India is still largely an agricultural country. The service sector – shops, banks, the IT industry, hotels and other services are employing more people and the urban middle class is growing, along with urban middle class values like those we see in television serials and films. But we also see that very few people in India have access to secure jobs, with even the small number in regular salaried employment becoming more insecure due to the rise in contract labour. So far, employment by the government was a major avenue for increasing the well-being of the population, but now even that is coming down. Some economists debate this, but liberalisation and privatisation worldwide appear to be associated with rising income inequality. You will be reading more about this in the next chapter on globalisation.

At the same time as secure employment in large industry is declining, the government is embarking on a policy of land acquisition for industry.

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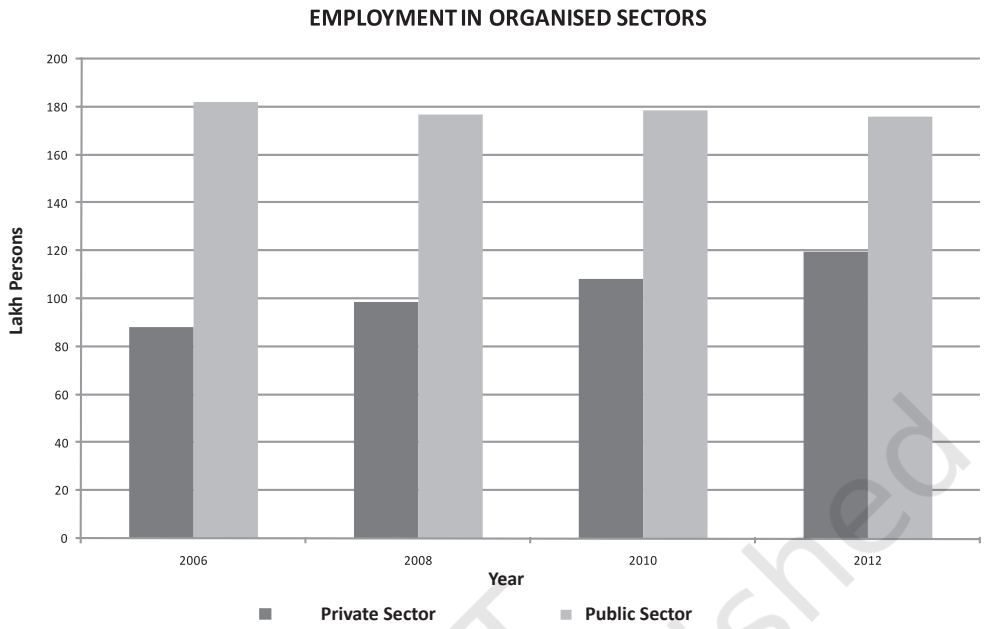

These industries do not necessarily provide employment to the people of the surrounding areas, but they cause major pollution. Many farmers, especially adivasis, who constitute approximately 40% of those displaced, are protesting at the low rates of compensation and the fact that they will be forced to become casual labour living and working on the footpaths of India's big cities. You will recall the discussion on competing interests from Chapter 3.

In the following sections, we will look at how people find work, what they actually do in their workplaces and what kind of working conditions they face.

5.3 How People Find Jobs

Only a small percentage of people get jobs through advertisements or through the employment exchange. People who are self-employed, like plumbers, electricians and carpenters at one end and teachers who give private tuitions, architects and freelance photographers at the other end, all rely on personal contacts. They hope that their work will be an advertisement for them. Mobile phones have made life much easier for plumbers and others who can now cater to a wider circle of people.

Job recruitment as a factory worker takes a different pattern. In the past, many workers got their jobs through contractors or jobbers. In the Kanpur textile mills, these jobbers were known as *mistris*, and were themselves workers. They came from the same regions and communities as the workers, but because they had the owner's backing they bossed over the workers. On the other hand,

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the *mistri* also put community-related pressures on the worker. Nowadays, the importance of the jobber has come down, and both management and unions play a role in recruiting their own people. Many workers also expect that they can pass on their jobs to their children. Many factories employ *badli* workers who substitute for regular permanent workers who are on leave. Many of these *badli* workers have actually worked for many years for the same company but are not given the same status and security. This is what is called contract work in the organised sector. Employment opportunities have two important components:

(i) job in an organisation as a casual wage labourer or regular salaried

(ii) Self-employment

Recently the Government of India floated many schemes, such as 'MUDRA', '*Aatmanirbhar Bharat*' and 'Make in India' in order to generate employment and self-employment to support all sections including the marginalised section of the society, like SC, ST and other backward classes. These are positive signs for creating economic potential amongst the demographic dividend of India.

However, the contractor system is most visible in the hiring of casual labour for work at construction sites, brickyards, and so on. The contractor goes to villages and asks if people want work. He will loan them some money. This loan includes the cost of transport to the work site. The loaned money is treated as an advance wage and the worker works without wages until the loan is repaid. In the past, agricultural labourers were tied to their landlord by debt. Now, however, by moving to casual industrial work, while they are still in debt, they are not bound by other social obligations to the contractor. In that sense, they are more free in an industrial society. They can break the contract and find another employer. Sometimes, whole families migrate and the children help their parents.

5.4 How is work carried out?

In this section, we will explore how work actually takes place. How are all the products we see around us manufactured? What is the relationship between managers and workers in a factory or in an office? In India, there is a whole range of work settings from large companies where work is automated to small home-based production.

The basic task of a manager is to control workers and get more work out of them. There are two main ways of making workers produce more. One is to extend the working hours. The other is to increase the amount that is produced within a given time period. Machinery helps to increase production, but it also creates the danger that eventually machines will replace workers. Both Marx and Mahatma Gandhi saw mechanisation as a danger to employment.

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Workers in textile mills, which is one of the oldest industries in India, often described themselves as extensions of the machine. Ramcharan, a weaver who had worked in the Kanpur cotton mills since the 1940s, said:

> You need energy. The eyes move, the neck, the legs and the hands, each part moves. Weaving is done under a continuous gaze - one cannot go anywhere, the focus must be on the machine. When four machines run all four must move together, they must not stop. *(Joshi 2003)*

Activity 5.2

Gandhi on Machinery, in *Hind Swaraj* 1924: "What I object to is the craze for machinery, not machinery as such. The craze is for what they call labour-saving machinery. Men go on 'saving labour' till thousands are without work and thrown on the open streets to die of starvation. I want to save time and labour, not for a fraction of mankind, but for all. I want the concentration of wealth, not in the hands of the few, but in the hands of all."

1934: "When as a nation we adopt the spinning-wheel, we not only solve the question of unemployment but we declare that we have no intention of exploiting any nation, and we also end the exploitation of the poor by the rich."

Give an example of how machinery creates a problem for workers. What alternative did Gandhi have in mind? How does adopting the spinning wheel prevent exploitation?

The more mechanised an industry gets, the fewer people are employed, but they too have to work at the pace of the machine. In Maruti Udyog Ltd., two cars roll off the assembly line every minute. Workers get only 45 minutes rest in the entire day - two tea breaks of 7.5 minutes each and one lunch break of half an hour. Most of them are exhausted by the age of 40 and take voluntary retirement. While production has gone up, the number of permanent jobs in the factory has gone down. The firm has outsourced all services like cleaning, and security, as well as the manufacture of parts. The parts suppliers are located around the factory and send the parts every two hours or just-in-time. Outsourcing and just-in-time keeps costs low for the company, but the workers are very tense, because if the supplies fail to arrive, their production targets get delayed, and when they do arrive they have to run to keep up. No wonder they get exhausted.

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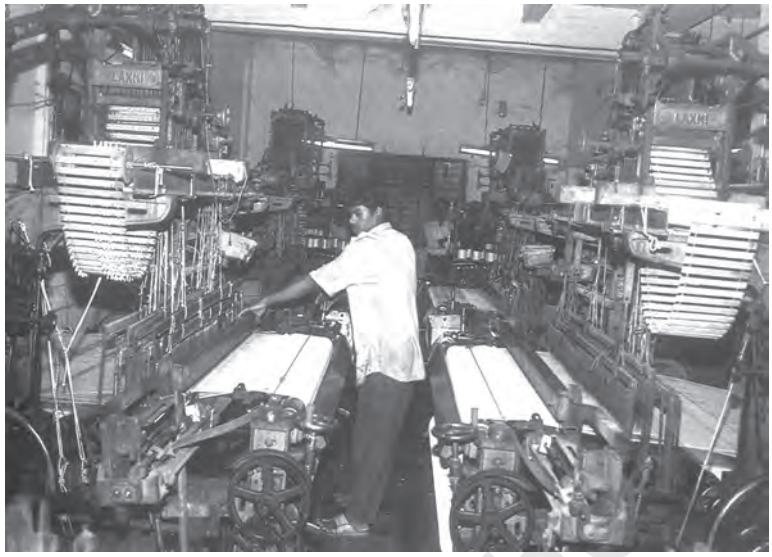

Now let us look at the services sector. Software professionals are middle class and well educated. Their work is supposed to be self-motivated and creative. But, as we see from the box, their work is also subject to Taylorist labour processes.

As a result of these working hours, in places like Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Gurugram, where many IT firms or call centres are located, shops and restaurants have also changed their opening hours, and are open late. If both husband and wife work, then children have to be put in crèches. The joint family, which was supposed to have disappeared with industrialisation, seems to have re-emerged, as grandparents are roped in to help with children.

Box 5.1

'Time Slavery' in the IT Sector

An average work day has 10–12 hours and it is not uncommon for employees to stay overnight in the office (known as a 'night out'), when faced with a project deadline. Long working hours are central to the industry's 'work culture'. In part, this is due to the time difference between India and the client site, such that conference calls tend to take place in the evening when the working day in the U.S. begins. Another reason is that overwork is built into the structure of outsourced projects: project costs and timelines are usually underestimated in terms of mandays, and because mandays are based on an eight-hour day, engineers have to put in extra hours and days in order to meet the deadlines. Extended working hours are legitimised by the common management practice of 'flexi-time', which in theory gives an employee freedom to choose his or her working hours (within limits) but, which in practice, means that they have to work as long as necessary to finish the task at hand. But even when there is no real work pressure, they tend to stay late in office either due to peer pressure or because they want to show the boss that they are working hard.

(Carol Upadhya, 2005)

One important debate in sociology is whether industrialisation and the shift to services and knowledge-based work, like IT, leads to greater skills in society. We often hear the phrase 'knowledge economy' to describe the growth of IT sector in India. But how do you compare the skills of a farmer who knows how to grow many hundreds of crops relying on his or her understanding of the weather, the soil and the seeds, with the knowledge of a software professional? Both are skilled but in different ways. The famous sociologist, Harry Braverman, argues that the use of machinery actually deskills workers. For example, whereas earlier architects and engineers had to be skilled draughtsmen, now the computer does a lot of the work for them.

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5.5 Working Conditions

We all want power, a solid house, clothes and other goods, but we should remember that these come to us because someone is working to produce them, often in very bad working conditions. The government has passed a number of laws to regulate working conditions. Let us look at mining, where a number of people are employed. Coal mines alone employ 5.5 lakh workers. The Mines Act 1952, which has now been included in the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Condition Code, 2020, specifies the maximum number of hours a person can be made to work in a week, the need to pay overtime for any extra hours worked and safety rules. These rules may be followed in big companies, but not in smaller mines and quarries. Moreover, sub-contracting is widespread. Many contractors do not maintain proper registers of workers, thus avoiding any responsibility for accidents and benefits. After mining has been finished in an area, the company is supposed to cover up the open holes and restore the area to its earlier condition. But they don't do this.

Workers in underground mines face very dangerous conditions, due to flooding, fire, the collapse of roofs and sides, the emission of gases and ventilation failures. Many workers develop breathing problems and diseases like tuberculosis and silicosis. Those working in overground mines have to work in both hot sun and rain, and face injuries due to mine blasting, falling objects, etc. The rate of mining accidents in India is very high compared to other countries.

In many industries, the workers are migrants. The fish processing plants along the coastline employ mostly single young women from Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Kerala. Ten-twelve of them are housed in small rooms, and sometimes one shift has to make way for another. Young women are seen as submissive workers. Many men also migrate singly, either unmarried or leaving their families in the village. These migrants have little time to socialise and whatever little time and money they can spend is with other migrant workers. From a nation of interfering joint families, the nature of work in a globalised economy is taking people in the direction of loneliness and vulnerability. Yet for many young women, it also represents some independence and economic autonomy.

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5.6 Home-based Work

Home-based work is an important part of the economy. This includes the manufacture of lace, zari or brocade, carpets, bidis, agarbattis and many such products. This work is mainly done by women and children. An agent provides raw materials and also picks up the finished product. Home workers are paid on a piece-rate basis, depending on the number of pieces they make.

Let us look at the bidi industry. The process of making bidis starts in forested villages where villagers pluck *tendu* leaves and sell it to the forest department or a private contractor who in turn sells it to the forest department. On average a person can collect 100 bundles (of 50 leaves each) a day. The government then auctions the leaves to bidi factory owners who give it to the contractors. The contractor in turn supplies tobacco and leaves to home-based workers. These workers, mostly women, roll the bidis – first dampening the leaves, then cutting them, filling in tobacco evenly and then tying them with thread. The contractor picks up these bidis and sells them to the manufacturer who roasts them, and puts on his own brand label. The manufacturer then sells them to a distributor who distributes the packed bidis to wholesalers who in turn sell to your neighbourhood pan shops.

Activity 5.3

During 2020–21, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, hundreds and thousands of IT sector workers worked from home. Find out the differences and commonalities between home-based work and those who work from home.

5.7 Strikes and Unions

In response to harsh working conditions, sometimes workers went on strike. In a strike, workers do not go to work. In a lockout, the management shuts the gate and prevents workers from coming. To call a strike is a difficult decision as managers may try to use substitute labour. Workers also find it hard to sustain themselves without wages.

Let us look at one famous strike, the Bombay Textile strike of 1982, which was led by the trade union leader, Dr. Datta Samant, and affected nearly a quarter of a million workers and their families. The strike lasted nearly two years. The workers wanted better wages and also wanted the right to form their own union. Slowly after two years, people started going back to work because they were desperate. Nearly one lakh workers lost their jobs and went back to their villages, or took up casual labour, others moved to smaller towns, like Bhiwandi, Malegaon and Icchalkaranji, to work in the powerloom sector. Mill owners did not invest in machinery and modernisation. Today, they are trying to sell off the mill land to real estate dealers to build luxury apartments, leading to a battle over who will define the future of Mumbai – the workers who built it or the mill owners and real estate agents.

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Questions

1. Choose any occupation you see around you – and describe it along the following lines: a) social composition of the work force – caste, gender, age, region; b) labour process – how the work takes place, c) wages and other benefits, d) working conditions – safety, rest times, working hours, etc.
2. How has liberalisation affected employment patterns in India?

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6 Globalisation and Social Change

The Raj hangover is a thing of the past. With globalisation has come acceptance of our Indian identity. The *mantra* of the moment is to merge the English language with the vernacular. Get into the *des* groove with
Priya Pathiyan

Phir bhi dil is Hindustani

Gone is the *zamaana* when this sentence would be considered uncool at school. Today, vernacular lingo liberally spices up conversations across the country from Kapurthala to Kozhikode. And unlike in the past, it's now quite the 'hip and happening' thing to do. With regional languages shedding their 'vernac', 'verny' and 'vern

ceases to mirror the changing attitudes of society. There's Hinglish, there's Banglish (Bengali + English)... hybrids that occur not because people want them to, but because they're the best way to express oneself when either of the two separate languages are unable to convey one's meaning effectively on their own."

young and the jet-set use the lexicon of the times... From Pepsi's '*Yeh Dil Maange* More' to Samsung's '*Go! Do, Flat.Lo*' offer and the ad for Haldiram's Chips which encourages us to '*Just* Munch *Karo*', communication is the aim of the game and Hindi, English or Spanish, it's all the same.

also related. While old time MBAs prided themselves on their foreign degrees and matching accents, today they have to be in touch with the grassroots consumer. Most managers have to do a stint in the

University's department of English, says, "A language should never suffer from the curse of untouchability. It's good that English is open to accepting new words and there is no reason to feel impoverished

recognised languages and about 800 dialects, India has a lot of verbal resources to offer. Couple that fact with India's status as the world's second largest English-speaking country and the math is

University of Delhi, puts it: "The purity in English has been localised. Hinglish is not just an easy way to communicate, it's also becoming a accepted form of English. Tomorrow you might find Hinglish,

might soon be spea Hinglish!"

Whether Hinglis mainstream or not immaterial. What is that people are r shackled by the ru language and are f on communicating effectively. Appare *chalta hai* outlook plus points too.

(With inp

Trend-spotting: English goes vernacular

Richest one per cent owns 40 per cen

ort by U.N. institute finds the richest 10 per cent of

We always of global assets. Half the world's adult population,

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rports Authority of India has release

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ation. Only absolute figures in this case

hether the increase is real or relative

towns are growing visibly as travel dest

connected abroad through direct inte

gnifies the socio-economic change tha

tellite townships and non-metro tow

and consumer demand — both spin-

ng power outside of the metro — have

market in luxury cars, designer weddi

official recognition tha

abled services (ITeS), is slowly losing ground to Gurgaon.

The millennium city that has already made a mark in offshoring business is the next hot spot for Business Transformation Outsourcing (BTO), according to a study conducted by the Associated

2007-08, the All India BTO market will be around $7.5 billion in which Gurgaon's share will be over $1.4 billion," said D.S. Rawat, Secretary General, ASSOCHAM.

Gurgaon's share will be

$1.4 billion

busy assimilating the findings of this study that would be published in January 2007. By 2010, the All India BTO market will touch $18 billion, said Rawat. And Gurgaon has a special place

Knee-jerk reactions behin high market volatility

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No discussion on social change in the twenty-first century can take place without some reference to globalisation. It is but natural that in this book on social change and development, the terms globalisation and liberalisation have already appeared in your earlier chapters. Recall the section on globalisation, liberalisation, and rural society in Chapter 4. Go back and read the section on the Indian government's policy of liberalisation and its impact on Indian industries in Chapter 5. It also came up when we discussed *Vision Mumbai* and the new visions for global cities in Chapter 3. Other than your school books, you must have come across the term globalisation in newspapers, television programmes or even in everyday conversation.

Diabetic population highest in India: Atlas

China follows right behind with 39.8 million diabetics

Ramya Kannan

- India will top list even in 2025: projections
- China ahead of India in pre-diabetic stage

CHENNAI: If anything, the International Diabetes Federation's (IDF) Diabetes Atlas released early December in South Africa, only confirms what we already know: India has the largest number of people living with diabetes.

It is in the pre-diabetic phase, Impaired Glucose Tolerance, that China overtakes India, both in the prevalence and projections.

The At[illegible] series that began in 2000, begins with the preamble: "With the forc[illegible] of globalisation a[illegible] industria[illegible]tion pro[illegible]ing at an increasing rate, the prevalence of diabetes is predicted to increase dramatically in the next few decades. T[illegible] sulting burden of com[illegible]tions and prem[illegible] mortality will contin[illegible] present itself as a majo[illegible] growing public health [illegible] lem for most countries."

The IDF has worked [illegible] Atlas, hoping to create a[illegible] pact on the public healt[illegible] icy of various governm[illegible] across the world, ad[illegible] them to factor diabetes into their plans, according to A. Ramachandran, Director, Diabetes Research Centre and M.V. Hospital for Diabetes, Chennai.

Dr. Ramachandran, who also served on the Atlas Committee where his research has been extensively quoted, says, "we need to push the cause of fighting diabetes with governments. We believe that politicians are consome distance between itself and India. China will have 59.3 million diabetics in 2025, the Atlas says.

However, the Atlas throws up figures that put China ahead of India in the pre-diabetic stage defined as Impaired Glucose Tolerance (IGT), again associated with insulin resistance.

In fact, China is currently way ahead of the rest of the world, with 64.3 million people with IGT, and will continue to be in 2025, according to the Atlas, with 79.1 million IGTs. India follows with a current prevalence of 35.9 million persons and a projected total of 56.2 million people in 2025.

Activity 6.1

Read any newspaper regularly for two weeks and note down how the term 'globalisation' is used. Compare your notes with others in the class.

Note down references to the term 'globalisation' and 'global' in different kinds of television programmes. You can focus on news and discussions on political or economic or cultural matters.

The Big Global Movement Against WTO

[illegible]xth Ministerial Conference (MC6) of World Trade Organisation (WTO) go the Seattle and [illegible]ay? The clarion call to 'Derail the Hong Kong Ministerial' scheduled from 13-18 December [illegible]been reverberating from all corners of the world.

Ghaziabad– global city

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Activity 6.1 will help you notice the various ways the term is used. But we still need to be clear about what exactly does the term means. In this chapter we seek to understand the meaning of globalisation, its different dimensions and their social consequences.

However, this does not mean that there can be only one definition of globalisation and only one way of understanding it. Indeed you will find that different subjects or academic disciplines may focus on different aspects of globalisation. Economics may be dealing more with the economic dimensions such as capital flows. Political science may focus on the changing role of governments. However, the very process of globalisation is so far-reaching that disciplines have to increasingly borrow from each other to understand both the causes and consequences of globalisation. Let us see how sociology seeks to understand globalisation.

What Sociology does is use the sociological imagination to make sense of the connections between the individual and society, the micro and the macro, the local and the global. How is the peasant affected in a remote village? How is s/he connected to global changes? How has it affected the chances of employment for the middle class? How has it affected the possibilities of big Indian corporations becoming transnational corporations? What does it mean to the neighbourhood grocer if the retail sector is opened up to big transnational companies? Why are there so many shopping malls in our cities and towns today? How has it changed the way young people spend their leisure time? These are just few examples of the wide ranging and different kinds of changes that globalisation is bringing about. You will find many more instances whereby global developments are affecting the lives of people. And thereby affecting the way sociology has to study society.

With the opening up of the market and removal of restrictions to the import of many products, we have many more products from different corners of the world in our neighbourhood shops. Since April 1, 2001, all types of quantitative restrictions (QR) on imports were withdrawn. It is no surprise now to find a Chinese pear, an Australian apple vying for attention in the local fruit stall. The neighbourhood store also has Australian orange juice and ready to fry chips in frozen packets. What we eat and drink at home with our family and friends slowly changes. The same set of policy changes affects consumers and producers differently. What may mean greater choices for the urban, affluent consumer may mean a crisis of livelihood for a farmer. These changes are personal because they affect individuals' lives and lifestyles. They are obviously also linked to public policies adopted by the government and its agreement with the World Trade Organisation (WTO). Likewise macro policy changes have meant that instead of one television channel we have literally scores today. The dramatic changes in the media are perhaps the most visible effect of globalisation. We will be discussing this in greater detail in the next chapter. These are just few random examples but they may help you to appreciate the close interconnection

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that exists between your personal lives and the apparently remote policies of globalisation. As mentioned earlier, the sociological imagination enables to make this connection between the micro and the macro, between the personal and public.

The sociologist or social anthropologist cannot study society as though it was an isolated entity. The compression of space and time has changed this. Sociologists have to study villages, families, movements, child rearing practices, work and leisure, bureaucratic organisations or castes taking this global interconnection into account. Studies will have to take into account the impact of WTO rules on agriculture and therefore on the farmer.

The effect of globalisation is far reaching. It affects us all but affects us differently. Thus, while for some it may mean new opportunities, for others the loss of livelihood. Women silk spinners and twisters of Bihar lost their jobs once the Chinese and Korean silk yarn entered the market. Weavers and consumers prefer this yarn as it is somewhat cheaper and has a shine. Similar displacements have come with the entry of large fishing vessels into Indian waters. These vessels take away the fish that used to be earlier collected by Indian fishing vessels. The livelihood of women fish sorters, dryers, vendors and net makers thereby get affected. In Gujarat, women gum collectors, who were picking from the '*julifera*' (Baval trees), lost their employment due to the import of cheaper gum from Sudan. In almost all cities of India, the rag pickers lost some of their employment due to import of waste paper from developed countries. We will see later in the chapter how traditional entertainers are affected.

It is obvious that globalisation is of great social significance. But as you saw its impact on different sections of society is very different. There are, therefore, sharply divided views about the impact of globalisation regarding its effect. Some believe that it is necessary to herald a better world. Others fear that the impact of globalisation on different sections of people is vastly different. They argue that while many in the more privileged section may benefit, the condition of a large section of the already excluded population worsens. There are yet others who argue that globalisation is not a new development at all. In the next two sections we look at these issues. We find out a bit more about the kind of global inter-connections that India had in the past. We also examine whether indeed globalisation has some distinctive features and if so what is it.

6.1 Are Global Interconnections New to World and to India

If globalisation is about global interconnections we can ask whether this is really a new phenomenon. Was India or the different parts of the world not interacting with each other in earlier times?

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The Early Years

India was not isolated from the world even two thousand years ago. We have read in our history textbooks about the famous Silk route, which centuries ago connected India to the great civilisations, which existed in China, Persia, Egypt and Rome. We also know that throughout India's long past, people from different parts came here, sometimes as *traders*, sometimes as *conquerors*, sometimes as *migrants* in search of new lands and settled down here. In remote Indian villages often people 'recall' a time when their ancestors lived elsewhere, from where they came and settled down where they now live.

Box 6.1

It is interesting to note that the greatest grammarian in Sanskrit namely Panini, who systematised and transformed Sanskrit grammar and phonetics around the fourth century BCE, was of Afghan origin. ...The seventh-century Chinese scholar Yi Jing learned his Sanskrit in Java (in the city of Shri Vijaya) on his way from China to India. The influence of interactions is well reflected in languages and vocabularies throughout Asia from Thailand to Malaya to Indo-China, Indonesia, the Philippines, Korea and Japan. ...
We can find a warning against isolationism in a parable about a well-frog- the 'kupamanduka'- that persistently recurs in several old Sanskrit texts...The *kupamanduka* is a frog that lives its whole life within a well, knows nothing else, and is suspicious of everything outside it. It talks to no one, and argues with no one on anything. It merely harbours the deepest suspicion of the outside world. The scientific, cultural and economic history of the world would have been very limited indeed had we lived like well-frogs. *(Sen 2005: 84–86)*

Global interactions or even a global outlook are thus not novel developments unique to the modern period or unique to modern India.

Colonialism and the Global Connection

We began our story of social and economic development in modern India from the colonial period. You will recall from Chapter 1 that modern capitalism had a global dimension from its very inception. Colonialism was part of the system that required new sources of capital, raw materials, energy, markets and a global network that sustained it. Often globalisation today identifies large-scale movement of people or *migration* as a defining feature. You know, however, that perhaps the greatest movement of people was the migration of European people who settled down in the Americas and Australia. You will remember how indentured labourers were taken away in ships from India to work in distant parts of Asia, Africa and Americas. And the slave trade that carted thousands of Africans away to distant shores.

Independent India and the World

Independent India retained a *global outlook*. In many senses this was inherited from the Indian nationalist movement. Commitment to liberation struggles

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throughout the world, solidarity with people from different parts of the world was very much part of this vision. Many Indians travelled overseas for education and work. *Migration* was an ongoing process. Export and import of raw material, goods and technology was very much a part of the development since independence. Foreign firms did operate in India. So we need to ask ourselves whether the current process of change is radically different from anything we have seen in the past.

6.2 Understanding Globalisation

We have seen that India had significant links with the global world from very early times. We are also aware that western capitalism as it emerged in Europe was both built upon and maintained by global control over resources of other countries as in colonialism. The important question is, however, whether globalisation is just about global interconnections. Or is it about some significant changes in the capitalist system of production and communication, organisation of labour and capital, technological innovations and cultural experiences, ways of governance and social movements? These changes are significant even if some of the patterns were already evident in the early stages of capitalism. Some of the changes such as those flowing from the communication revolution have in a myriad ways transformed the way we work and live.

We seek to spell out some of the distinctive features of globalisation below. As you go through them you will realise why a simple definition of global interconnection does not capture the intensity and complexity of globalisation.

Globalisation refers to the growing interdependence between different people, regions and countries in the world *as social and economic relationships come to stretch world-wide*. Although *economic forces* are an integral part of globalisation, it would be wrong to suggest that they alone produce it. It has been driven forward above all by the development of *information and communication technologies* that have intensified the speed and scope of interaction between people all over the world. Moreover, as we shall see, there was a political context within which it grew. Let us look at the different dimensions of globalisation. To facilitate our discussion we deal with the economic, political and cultural aspects separately. However, you will soon realise how closely connected and interconnected they are.

The Different Dimensions of Globalisation

The Economic

In India we often use the terms liberalisation and globalisation. They are indeed related but not the same. In India we have seen how the state decided to bring some changes in its economic policy in 1991. These changes are termed as liberalisation policies.

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a. The Economic Policy of Liberalisation

Globalisation involves a stretching of social and economic relationships throughout the world. This stretching is pushed by certain economic policies. Very broadly this process in India is termed as liberalisation. The term liberalisation refers to a range of policy decisions that the Indian state took since 1991 to open up the Indian economy to the world market. This marked a break with an earlier stated policy of the government to have a greater control over the economy. The state after independence had put in place a large number of laws that ensured that the Indian market and Indian indigenous business were protected from competition of the wider world. The underlying assumption of such a policy was that an erstwhile colonial country would be at disadvantage in a free market situation.

Liberalisation of the economy meant the steady removal of the rules that regulated Indian trade and finance regulations. These measures are also described as *economic reforms*. What are these reforms? Since July 1991, the Indian economy has witnessed a series of reforms in all major sectors of the economy (agriculture, industry, trade, foreign investment and technology, public sector, financial institutions, etc). The basic assumption was that greater integration into the global market would be beneficial to Indian economy.

The process of liberalisation also involved the taking of loans from international institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF). These loans are given on certain conditions. The government makes commitments to pursue certain kind of economic measures that involve a policy of structural adjustments. These adjustments usually mean cuts in state expenditure on the social sector such as health, education and social security. There is also a greater say by international institutions such as the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

b. The transnational corporations

Among the many economic factors driving globalisation, the role of transnational corporations (TNCs) is particularly important. TNCs are companies that produce goods or market services in more than one country. These may be relatively small firms with one or two factories outside the country in which they are based. They could also be gigantic international ones whose operations criss-cross the globe. Some of the biggest MNCs are companies known all around the world: Coca Cola, General Motors, Colgate-Palmolive, Kodak, Mitsubishi and many others. They are oriented to the global markets and global profits even if they have a clear national base. Some Indian corporations are also becoming transnational. We are, however, not sure at this point of time, what this trend may mean to the people of India as a whole.

c. The electronic economy

The '*electronic economy*' is another factor that underpins economic globalisation. Banks, corporations, fund managers and individual investors are able to shift funds internationally with the click of a mouse. This new ability to move 'electronic money' instantaneously carries with it great risks however. In

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Activity 6.2

Make a list of products that you either use or have seen in the market or seen advertised which are produced by transnational corporations. You can make a list of products such as:

- Shoes
- Cameras
- Computers
- Televisions
- Cars
- Music Systems
- Cosmetics like soaps or shampoos
- Clothes
- Processed Food
- Tea
- Coffee
- Milk Powder

India often this is discussed with reference to rising stock markets and also sudden dips because of foreign investors buying stocks, making a profit and then selling them off. Such transactions can happen only because of the communication revolution, which we discuss later.

d. The Weightless Economy or Knowledge Economy

In contrast to previous eras, the global economy is no longer primarily agricultural or industrial in its basis. The weightless economy is one in which products have their base in information, as in the case with computer software, media and entertainment products and internet-based services. A knowledge economy is one in which much of the workforce is involved not in the physical production or distribution of material goods, but in their design, development, technology, marketing, sale and servicing. It can range from the neighbourhood catering service to large organisations involved in providing a host of services for both professional meets like conferences to family events like weddings. We have a host of new occupations that was unheard of a few decades ago, for instance event managers. Have you heard of them? What do they do? Find out about other such new services.

e. *Globalisation of finance*

It should also be noted that for the first time, mainly due to the information technology revolution, there has been a globalisation of finance. Globally integrated financial markets undertake billions of dollars worth transactions within seconds in the electronic circuits. There is a 24-hour trading in capital and security markets. Cities such as New York, Tokyo and London are the key centres for financial trading. Within India, Mumbai is known as the financial capital of the country.

Activity 6.3

- Count the number of channels on television that are business channels and provide updates on stock markets, flows of foreign direct investments, financial reports of various companies, etc. You can choose whether you wish to focus on an Indian language channel or English channels.
- Find out the names of some financial newspapers.
- Do you see any focus on global trends? Discuss.
- How do you think these trends have affected our lives?

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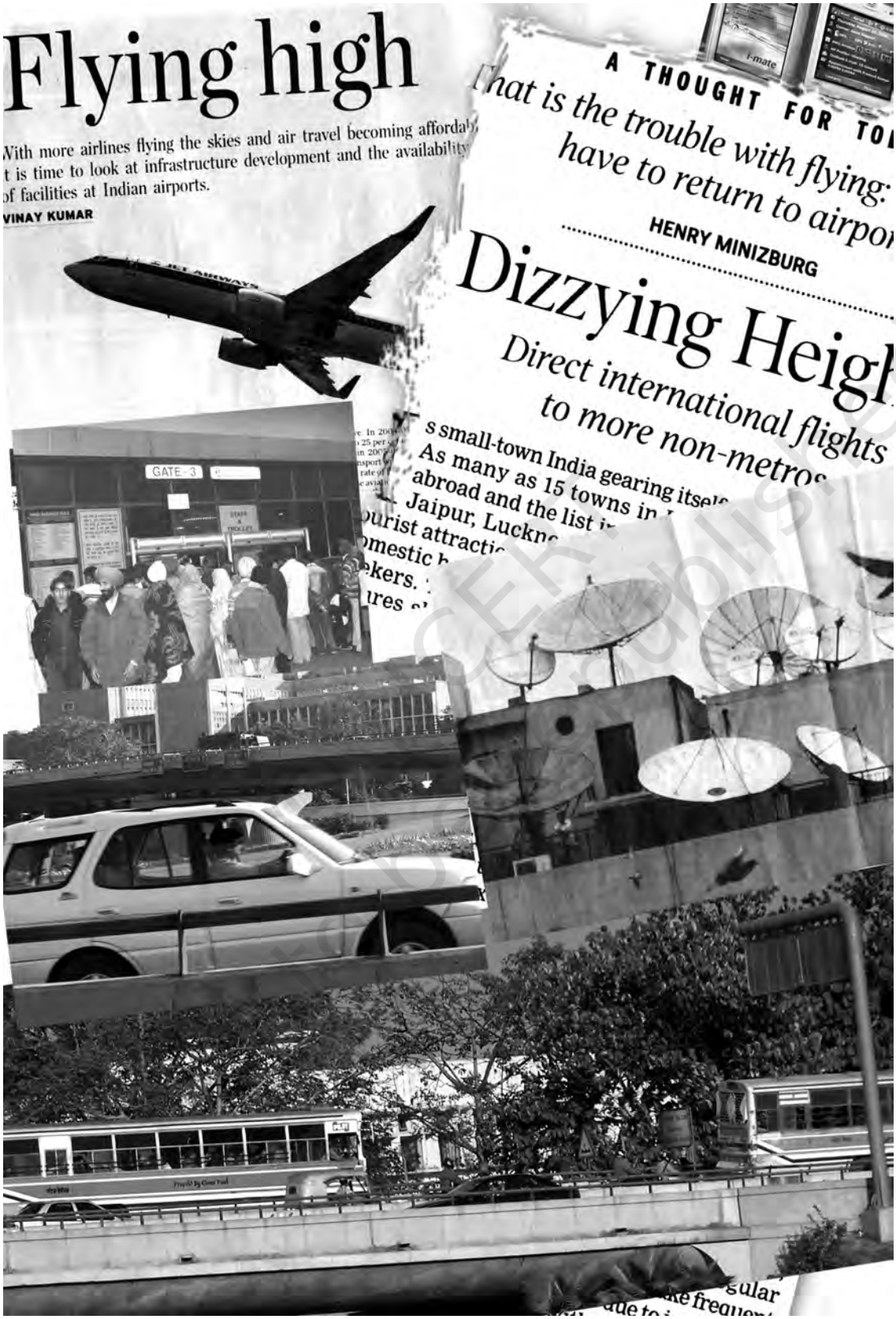

Flying high

With more airlines flying the skies and air travel becoming afforda
t is time to look at infrastructure development and the availabilit
of facilities at Indian airports.

VINAY KUMAR

A THOUGHT FOR TO

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have to return to airpo

HENRY MINIZBURG

Dizzying Heigh

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Global Communications

Important advances in technology and the world's telecommunications infrastructure has led to revolutionary changes in global communication. Some homes and many offices now have multiple links to the outside world, including telephones (landlines and mobiles), fax machines, digital and cable television, electronic mail and the Internet.

Some of you may find many such places. Some of you may not. This is indicative of what is often termed as the digital divide in our country. Despite this digital divide, these forms of technology do facilitate the 'compression' of time and space. Two individuals located on opposite sides of the planet – in Bengaluru and New York – not only can talk, but also send documents and images to one another with the help of satellite technology. The process of globalisation is giving rise to network and media society. To create global interconnectedness more efficiently, the Government of India has initiated an ambitious programme in the form of 'Digital India', in which every exchange will incorporate digitisation. It will transform India into a 'digitally empowered society' and a 'knowledge economy'. You have already seen how outsourcing operates in your earlier chapters.

Cellular telephony has also grown enormously and cell phones are a part of the self for most urban-based middle class youth. There has been a tremendous growth in the usage of cell phones and a marked change in how its use is seen.

Activity 6.4

- Is there an Internet café in your neighbourhood?
- Who are its users? What kind of use do they make of the Internet?
- Is it on work purpose? Is it a new form of entertainment?

Box 6.2

Globally, the use of the Internet increased phenomenally in the 1990s. In 1998, there were 70 million Internet users worldwide. Of these, the USA and Canada accounted for 62%, while Asia had 12%. By 2000, the number of Internet users had risen to 325 million. India had 3 million Internet subscribers and 15 million users by 2000, and this has now increased to 700 million.

(Singhal and Rogers 2001: 235)

According to a study in 2017–18, one in ten households have a computer at home. About a quarter of all homes have internet connectivity via mobile phone or other devices. The figures themselves indicate the digital divide that continues to prevail in the country inspite of the rapid spread of computers. Cyber connectivity had largely remained an urban phenomenon but widely accessible through the cyber cafés. But the rural areas with their erratic power supply, widespread illiteracy and lack of infrastructure, like telephone connections, still remain largely unconnected.

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Box 6.3

India's Telecommunications Expansion

When India gained Independence in 1947, the new nation had 84,000 telephone lines for its population of 350 million. Thirty-three years later, by 1980, India's telephone service was still bad with only 2.5 million telephones and 12,000 public phones for a population of 700 million; only 3 per cent of India's 600,000 villages had telephones. However, in the late 1990s, a sea change occurred in the telecommunication scenario: by 1999, India had installed a network of over 25 million telephone lines, spread across 300 cities, 4,869 towns and 310, 897 villages, making India's telecommunication network the ninth largest in the world. …Between 1988 and 1998, the number of villages with some kind of telephone facility increased from 27,316 to 300,000 (half of all villages in India). By 2000, some 650,000 public call offices (PCOs) provided reliable telephone service, where people can simply walk in, make a call, and pay the metered charges, had mushroomed all over India, including remote, rural, hilly, and tribal areas. The emergence of PCOs satisfies the strong Indian sociocultural need of keeping in touch with family members. Much like train travel in India, which is often undertaken to celebrate marriages, visit relatives, or attend funerals, the telephone is also viewed as a way of maintaining close family ties. Not surprisingly, most advertisements for telephony service show mothers talking to their sons and daughters, or grandparents talking to their grandchildren. Telephone and cell phone expansion in India, thus, serves a strong sociocultural function for its users, in addition to a commercial one.

Activity 6.5

Initially in the late1980s, cell phones are being looked at with distrust (misused by criminal elements). As late as 1998, they are perceived as luxury items (only the rich can own it and so owners should be taxed). By 2006, we have become the country with the fourth largest usage of cell phones. They have become so much part of our life that students are ready to go on a strike and appeal to the President of the country when denied cell phone usage in colleges.

Try and organise a discussion in the class on the reasons for the amazing growth in cell phones usage in India.

- Has it happened because of clever marketing and media campaign? Is it still a status symbol?
- Or, is there a strong need for remaining 'connected', communicating with friends and near and dear ones?
- Are parents encouraging its usage in order to lessen their anxieties about children's whereabouts?
- Try and find out the different reasons why the youth strongly feel the need for cell phones.

In 2020–21, due to COVID-19 pandemic, lakhs and lakhs of children began using cell phone and attended online classes. How do you see this change sociologically?

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Globalisation and Labour

Globalisation and a New International Division of Labour

A Call Centre

A new international division of labour has emerged in which more and more routine manufacturing production and employment is done in the Third World cities. You have already dealt with outsourcing in Chapter 4 and contract farming in Chapter 5. Here we simply draw upon the example of Nike company to illustrate how this works.

Nike grew enormously from its inception in the 1960s. Nike grew as an importer of shoes. The founder Phil Knight imported shoes from Japan and sold them at athletics meetings. The company grew to a multinational enterprise, a transnational corporation. Its headquarters are in Beverton, just outside Portland, Oregon. Only two US factories ever made shoes for Nike. In the 1960s they were made in Japan. As costs increased production shifted to South Korea in mid-1970s. Labour costs grew in South Korea, so in the 1980s production widened to Thailand and Indonesia. Since the 1990s we in India produce Nike. However, if labour is cheaper elsewhere production centres will move somewhere else. This entire process makes the labouring population very vulnerable and insecure. This flexibility of labour often works in favour of the producers. Instead of mass production of goods at a centralised location (Fordism), we have moved to a system of flexible production at dispersed locations (post-Fordism).

Box 6.4

General Motors produces an ostensibly American car such as Pontiac Le Mans. Of the showroom price of $20,000, only $7,600 goes to Americans (workers and management in Detroit, lawyers and bankers in New York, lobbyists in Washington, and General Motors shareholders all over the country).

Of the rest:

- 48 per cent goes to South Korea for labour and assembly.
- 28 per cent to Japan for advanced components such as engines and electronics.
- 12 per cent to Germany for styling and design engineering.
- 7 per cent to Taiwan and Singapore for small components.
- 4 per cent to the United Kingdom for marketing, and about
- 1 per cent to Barbados or Ireland for data processing

(Reich 1991)

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Globalisation and Employment

Another key issue regarding globalisation and labour is the relationship between employment and globalisation. Here too we see the uneven impact of globalisation. For the middle class youth from urban centres, globalisation and the IT revolution has opened up new career opportunities. Instead of routinely picking up B.Sc./ B.A./B.Com. degree from colleges, many young persons are learning computer languages at computer institutes, taking up jobs at call centers or Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) companies, working as sales persons in shopping malls or picking up jobs at the various restaurants that have opened up. Yet as Box 6.5 shows, broader trends of employment are disappointing.

Box 6.5

"The largest number of poor people lives in South Asia. The poverty rate is particularly high in India, Nepal and Bangladesh," states an ILO report "Labour and Social Trends in Asia and the Pacific 2005"... The study provides a stark analysis of a growing 'employment gap' in the Asia region. It states that the creation of new jobs has failed to keep pace with the region's impressive economic growth. Between 2003 and 2004, employment in Asia and the Pacific increased by a 'disappointing' 1.6 per cent, or by 25 million jobs, to a total of 1.588 billion jobs, compared to the strong economic growth rate of over 7 per cent.

"Job Growth Remains Disappointing- ILO" Labour File September - October 2005 p.54.

Find out from media on the employment situation today in Asian countries including India.

Globalisation and Political Changes

In many ways it was a major political change, namely, *the collapse of the erstwhile socialist world* that hastened globalisation. And also gave a specific economic and political approach to the economic policies that underpin globalisation. These changes are often termed as neo-liberal economic measures. We have already seen what concrete steps the liberalisation policy took in India. Broadly these policies reflect a political vision of free enterprise which believes that a free reign to market forces will be both efficient and fair. It is, therefore, critical of both state regulation and state subsidies. The existing process of globalisation in this sense does have a political vision as much as an economic vision. However, the possibilities that there can be a globalisation which is different do exist. We, thus have the concept of an inclusive globalisation, that is one, which includes all the sections of society.

Another significant political development which is accompanying globalisation is the *growth of international and regional mechanisms for political collaboration.* The European Union (EU), the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), South Asian Association for Regional Corporation (SAARC) are just some of the examples that indicate the greater role of regional associations.

The other political dimension has been the rise of International Governmental Organisations (IGOs) and International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs). An intergovernmental organisation is a body that is established by participating governments and given responsibility for regulating, or overseeing a particular domain of activity that is transnational in scope. The World Trade Organisation (WTO), for instance, increasingly has a major say in the rules that govern trade practices.

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As the name suggests, INGOs differ from intergovernmental organisations in that they are not affiliated with government institutions. Rather they are independent organisations, which make policy decisions and address international issues. Some of the best known INGOs are Greenpeace (see Chapter 8), The Red Cross, Amnesty International and Medecins Sans Frontieres (Doctors Without Borders). Find out more about them.

Globalisation and Culture

There are many ways that globalisation affects culture. We saw earlier that over the ages India has had an open approach to cultural influences and has been enriched because of this. The last decade has seen major cultural changes leading to fears that our local cultures would be overtaken. We saw earlier that our cultural tradition has been wary of the *kupamanduka*, the frog that lives its whole life within a well, knows nothing else, and is suspicious of everything outside it. It talks to no one, and argues with no one on anything. It merely harbours the deepest suspicion of the outside world. Fortunately for us we retain our 'traditional' open-ended attitude to this day. Thus there are heated debates in our society not just about political and economic issues but also about changes in clothes, styles, music, films, languages and body language. You will recall from Chapter 1 and 2 how the 19th century reformers and early nationalists also debated on culture and tradition. The issues today are in some ways the same, in some ways different. What is perhaps different is the scale and intensity of change.

Homogenisation Versus Glocalisation of Culture

A central contention is that all cultures will become similar, that is homogeneous. Others argue that there is an increasing tendency towards glocalisation of culture. Glocalisation refers to the mixing of the global with the local. It is not entirely spontaneous. Nor is it entirely delinked from the commercial interests of globalisation.

It is a strategy often adopted by foreign firms while dealing with local traditions in order to enhance their marketability. In India, we find that all the foreign television channels like Star, MTV, Channel V and Cartoon Network use Indian languages. Even McDonald's sells only vegetarian and chicken products in India and not its beef products, which are popular abroad. McDonald's goes vegetarian during the Navaratri festival. In the field of music, one can see the growth of popularity of 'Bhangra pop', 'Indi pop', fusion music and even remixes.

Activity 6.6

- Identify other instances of glocalisation. Discuss.
- Have you noticed any changes in the films produced by Bollywood? While at one time there were scenes shot in foreign countries, the stories remained local. Then there were stories where characters returned to India even if part of the story was set abroad. Now there are stories set entirely outside India. Discuss.

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We have already seen how the strength of Indian culture has been its open ended approach. We also saw how through the modern period our reformers and nationalists actively debated tradition and culture. Culture cannot be seen as an unchanging fixed entity that can either collapse or remain the same when faced with social change. What is more likely even today is that globalisation will lead to the creation of not just new local traditions but global ones too.

Gender and Culture

Very often defenders of a fixed traditional idea of cultural identity defend undemocratic and discriminating practices against women in the name of cultural identity. These could range from a defence of sati to defence of women's exclusion from education and participation in public matters. Globalisation can then be taken as a bogey to defend unjust practices against women. Fortunately for us in India we have been able to retain and develop a democratic tradition and culture that allows us to define culture in a more inclusive and democratic fashion.

Culture of Consumption

Often when we speak of culture we refer to dresses, music, dances, food. However, culture as we know refers to a whole way of life. There are two uses of culture that any chapter on globalisation should mention. They are the culture of consumption and corporate culture. Look at the crucial role that cultural consumption is playing in the process of globalisation especially in shaping the growth of cities. Till the 1970s the manufacturing industries used to play a major role in the growth of cities. Presently, cultural consumption (of art, food, fashion, music, tourism) shapes to a large extent the growth of cities. This is evident in the spurt in the growth of shopping malls, multiplex cinema halls, amusement parks and 'water world' in every major city in India. Most significantly advertisements and the media in general promote a culture where spending is important. To be careful with money is no longer a virtue. Shopping is a past time actively encouraged.

Successive successes in fashion pageants like Miss Universe and Miss World have led to a tremendous growth in industries in the fields of fashion, cosmetics and health. Young girls dream of being an Aishwarya Rai or Sushmita Sen. Popular game shows like *Kaun Banega Crorepati* actually made it seem possible that your fortunes could turn over a few games.

Activity 6.7

- Compare the traditional shop and the new departmental stores that have come up.
- Compare the mall with the traditional market. Discuss how it is not just goods that change but how the meaning of shopping changes.
- Discuss the new kinds of food that is now served in eating places.
- Find out about the new fast food restaurants that are global in their menu and operation.

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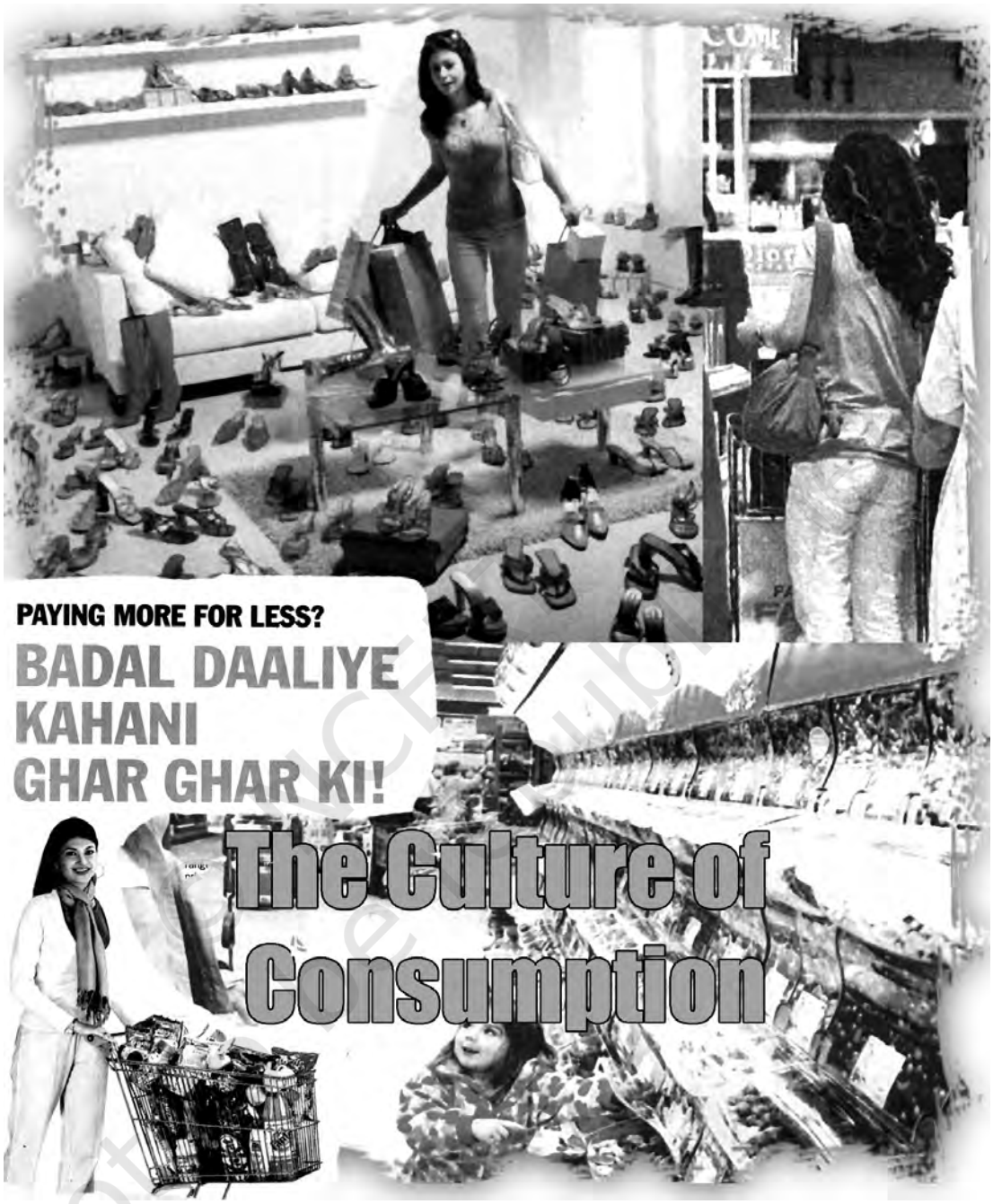

Corporate Culture

Corporate culture is a branch of management theory that seeks to increase productivity and competitiveness though the creation of a unique organisational culture involving all members of a firm. A dynamic corporate culture - involving company events, rituals and traditions - is thought to enhance employee loyalty and promote group solidarity. It also refers to the way of doing things, of promotion and packaging products.

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The spread of multinational companies and the opportunities opened up by the information technology revolution has created in the metropolitan cities in India a class of upwardly mobile professionals working in software companies, multinational banks, chartered accountancy firms, stock markets, travel, fashion designing, entertainment, media and other allied fields. These high-flying professionals have highly stressful work schedules, get exorbitant salaries and are the main clientele of the booming consumer industry.

Threat to many Indigenous Craft and Literary Traditions and Knowledge Systems

Yet another link between cultural forms and globalisation is evident from the condition of many indigenous craft and literary traditions and knowledge systems. It is, however, important to remember that modern development even prior to the stage of globalisation did make inroads into traditional cultural forms and occupations based on them. But the sheer scale and intensity of change is enormous. For instance about 30 theatre groups, which were active around the textile mills area of Parel and Girgaum of Mumbai city, have become defunct, as most of the mill workers are out of jobs in these areas. Some years back, there were reports of large number of suicides by the traditional weavers in Sircilla village of Karimnagar district and in Dubakka village in Medak district, both in Andhra Pradesh. These weavers with no means to invest in technology were unable to adapt to the changing consumer tastes and competition from power looms.

Similarly, various forms of traditional knowledge systems especially in the fields of medicine and agriculture have been preserved and passed on from one generation to the other. Recent attempts by some multinational companies to patent the use of Tulsi, Haldi (turmeric), *Rudraksha* and Basmati rice have highlighted the need for protecting the base of its indigenous knowledge systems.

Box 6.6

The condition of our *dombari* community is very bad. Television and radio have snatched away our means of livelihood. We perform acrobatics but because of the circus and the television, which have reached even in remote corners and villages, nobody is interested in our performances. We do not get even a pittance, however hard we perform. People watch our shows but just for entertainment, they never pay us anything. They never bother about the fact that we are hungry. Our profession is dying.

(More 1970)

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It is no easy task to sum up the diverse and complex ways that globalisation is affecting our lives. One will not even attempt it. One leaves this task to you. We have not discussed the impact of globalisation on industry and agriculture in any detail here in this chapter. You have to draw from Chapter 4 and 5 to build up the story of globalisation and social change in India. In the recounting of this story, use your sociological imagination.

Questions

1. Choose any topic that is of interest to you and discuss how you think globalisation has affected it. You could choose cinema, work, marriage or any other topic.
2. What are the distinctive features of a globalised economy? Discuss.
3. Briefly discuss the impact of globalisation on culture.
4. What is glocalisation? Is it simply a market strategy adopted by multinational companies or is genuine cultural synthesis taking place? Discuss.

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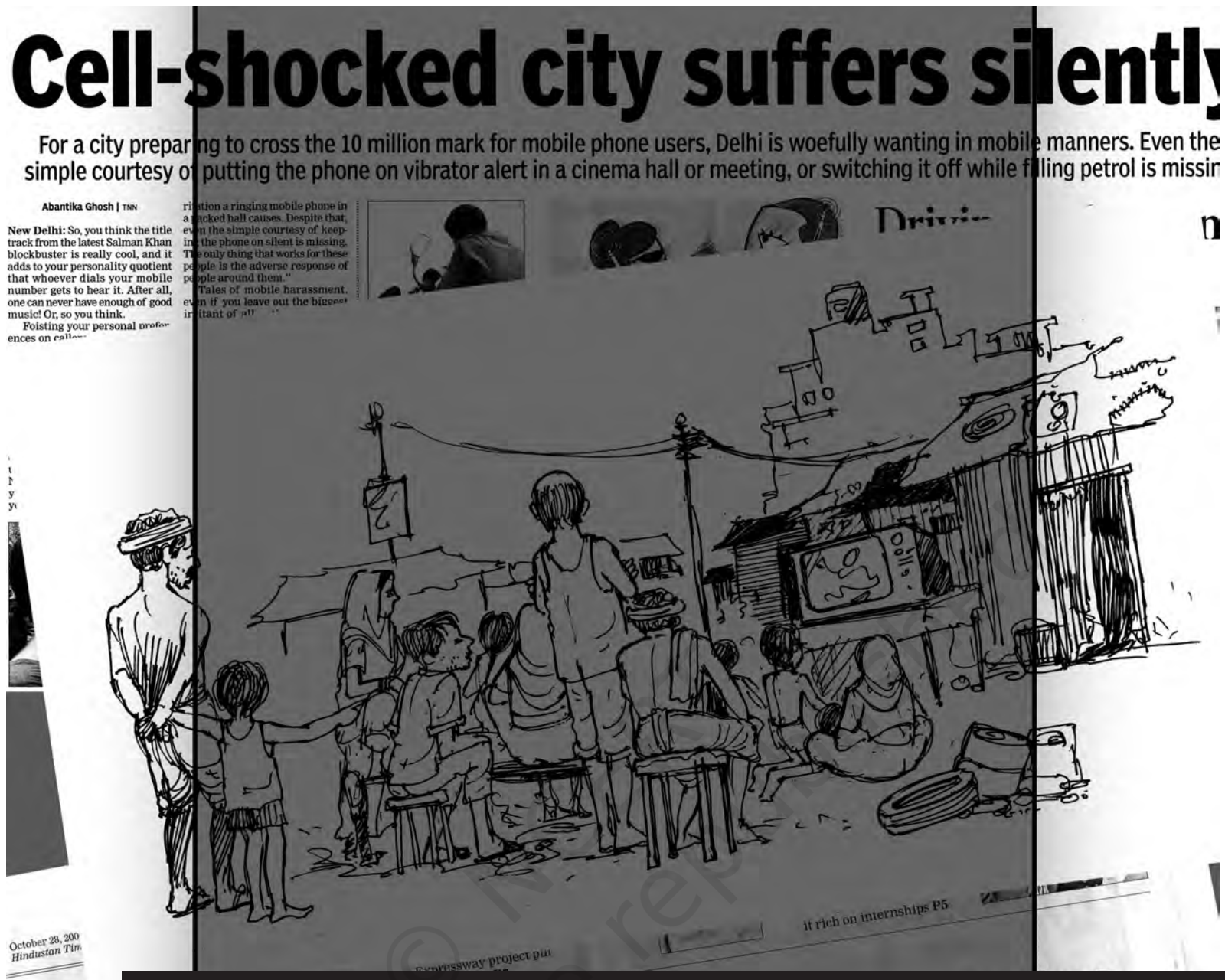

7 Mass Media and Communications

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The mass media include a wide variety of forms, including television, newspapers, films, magazines, radio, advertisements, video games and CDs. They are referred to as 'mass' media because they reach mass audiences – audiences comprise very large numbers of people. They are also sometimes referred to as *mass communications*. For many in your generation, it is probably difficult to imagine a world without some form of mass media and communications.

Activity 7.1

- Imagine a world where there is no television, no cinema, no newspapers, no magazines, no internet, no telephones, no mobile phones.
- Write down your daily activities in a day. Identify the occasions when you used the media in some way or the other.
- Find out from an older generation what life was like without any of these forms of communication. Compare it with your life.
- Discuss the ways work and leisure have changed with the developments in communication technologies.

Mass media is a part of our everyday life. In many middle class households across the country people wake up only to put on the radio, switch on the television, look for the morning newspaper. The younger children of the same households may first glance at their mobile phones to check their missed calls. Plumbers, electricians, carpenters, painters and sundry other service providers in many urban centres have a mobile telephone where they can be easily contacted. Many shops in cities increasingly have a small television set. Customers who come in may exchange bits of conversation about the cricket match being telecasted or the film being shown. Indians abroad keep regular touch with friends and families back home over the Internet and telephone. Migrants from working class population in the cities are regularly in touch with their families in the villages over the phone. Have you seen the range of advertisements of mobile phones? Have you noticed the diverse social

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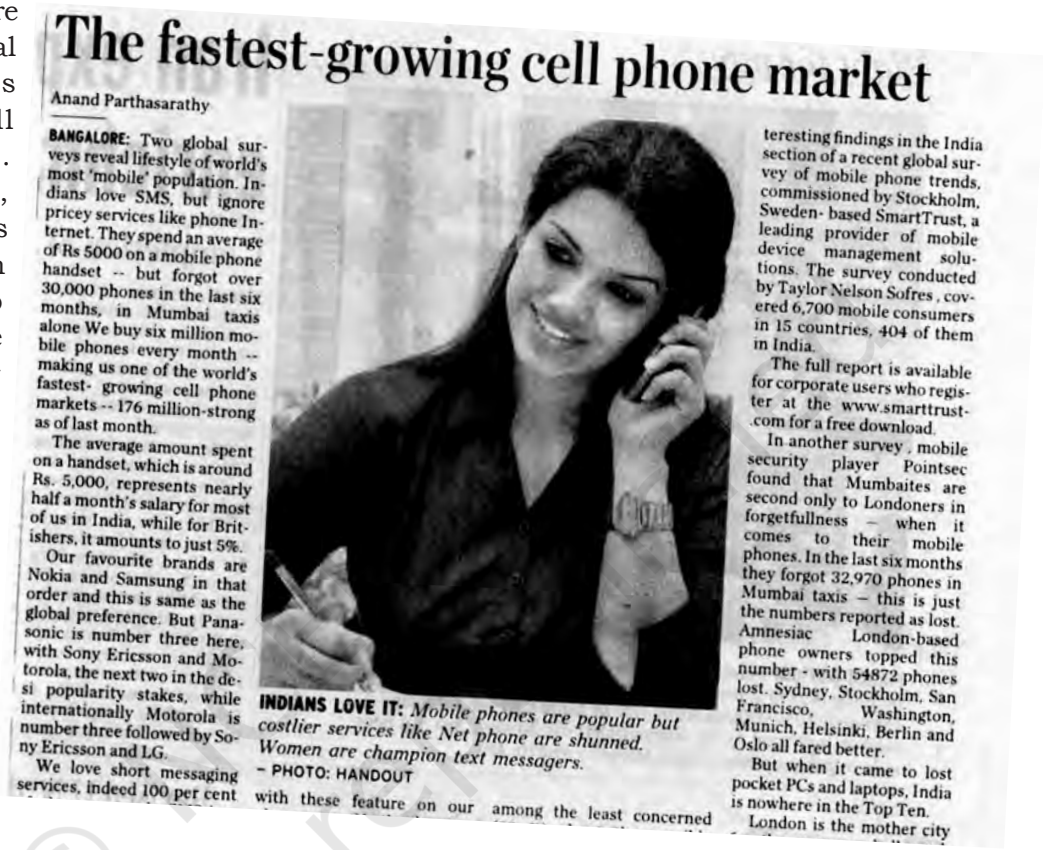
groups that they are catering to? The CBSE Board results are available on both the Internet and over the mobile phone. Indeed this very book is available on the Internet.

It is obvious that there has been a phenomenal expansion of mass communication of all kinds in recent years. As students of sociology, there are many aspects to this growth which is of great interest to us. *First*, while we recognise the specificity of the current communication revolution, it is important to go back a little and sketch out the growth of modern mass media in the world and in India. This helps us realise that like any other social institution the structure and content of mass media is shaped by changes in the economic, political and socio-cultural contexts. For instance, we see how central the state and its vision of development influenced the media in the first decades after independence. And how in the post 1990 period of globalisation, the market has a key role to play. *Second*, this help us better appreciate how the relationship between mass media and communication with society is dialectical. Both influence each other. The nature and role of mass media is influenced by the society in which it is located. At the same time the far reaching influence of mass media on society cannot be over-emphasised. We shall see this dialectical relationship when we discuss in this chapter—(a) the role of media in colonial India, (b) in the first decades after independence and (c) and finally in the context of globalisation. *Third*, mass communication is different from other means of communication as it requires a formal structural organisation to meet large-scale capital, production and management demands. You will find, therefore, that the state and/or the market have a major role in the structure and functioning of mass media. Mass media functions through very large organisations with major investments and large body of employees. *Fourth*, there are sharp differences between how easily different sections of people can use mass media. You will recall the concept of digital divide from the last chapter.



The fastest-growing cell phone market

Anand Parthasarathy

BANGALORE: Two global surveys reveal lifestyle of world's most 'mobile' population. Indians love SMS, but ignore pricey services like phone Internet. They spend an average of Rs 5000 on a mobile phone handset -- but forgot over 30,000 phones in the last six months, in Mumbai taxis alone We buy six million mobile phones every month -- making us one of the world's fastest- growing cell phone markets -- 176 million-strong as of last month.

The average amount spent on a handset, which is around Rs. 5,000, represents nearly half a month's salary for most of us in India, while for Britishers, it amounts to just 5%.

Our favourite brands are Nokia and Samsung in that order and this is same as the global preference. But Panasonic is number three here, with Sony Ericsson and Motorola, the next two in the desi popularity stakes, while internationally Motorola is number three followed by Sony Ericsson and LG.

We love short messaging services, indeed 100 per cent with these feature on our among the least concerned

INDIANS LOVE IT: *Mobile phones are popular but costlier services like Net phone are shunned. Women are champion text messagers.* – PHOTO: HANDOUT

teresting findings in the India section of a recent global survey of mobile phone trends, commissioned by Stockholm, Sweden- based SmartTrust, a leading provider of mobile device management solutions. The survey conducted by Taylor Nelson Sofres , covered 6,700 mobile consumers in 15 countries, 404 of them in India.

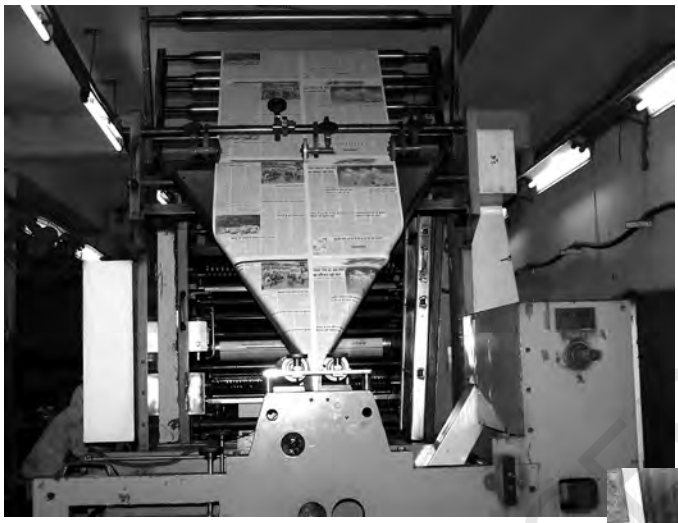
The full report is available for corporate users who register at the www.smarttrust-.com for a free download.

In another survey , mobile security player Pointsec found that Mumbaites are second only to Londoners in forgetfullness – when it comes to their mobile phones. In the last six months they forgot 32,970 phones in Mumbai taxis – this is just the numbers reported as lost. Amnesiac London-based phone owners topped this number - with 54872 phones lost. Sydney, Stockholm, San Francisco, Washington, Munich, Helsinki, Berlin and Oslo all fared better.

But when it came to lost pocket PCs and laptops, India is nowhere in the Top Ten. London is the mother city

7.1 The Beginnings of Modern Mass Media

The first modern mass media institution began with the development of the printing press. Although the history of print in certain societies dates back to many centuries, the first attempts at printing books using modern technologies began in Europe. This technique was first developed by Johann Gutenberg in 1440. Initial attempts at printing were restricted to religious books.



Visuals of a Printing Press and a TV Newsroom in 21st Century, India

With the Industrial Revolution, the print industry also grew. The first products of the press were restricted to an audience of literate elites. It was only in the mid 19th century, with further development in technologies, transportation and literacy that newspapers began to reach out to a mass audience. People living in different corners of the country found themselves reading or hearing the same news. It has been suggested that this was in many ways responsible for people across a country to feel connected and develop a sense of belonging or 'we feeling'. The well known scholar Benedict Anderson has thus argued that this helped the growth of nationalism, the feeling that people who did not even know of each other's existence feel like members of a family. It gave people who would never meet each other a sense of togetherness. Anderson thus suggested that we could think of the nation as an 'imagined community'.

You will recall how 19th century social reformers often wrote and debated in newspapers and journals. The growth of Indian nationalism was closely linked to its struggle against colonialism. It emerged in the wake of the institutional changes brought about by the British rule in India. Anti-colonial public opinion was nurtured and channelised by the nationalist press, which was vocal in its opposition to the oppressive measures of the colonial state. This led the colonial government to clamp down on the nationalist press and impose censorship, for instance during the Ilbert Bill agitation in 1883. Association

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with the national movement led some of the nationalist newspapers like *Kesari* (Marathi), *Mathrubhumi* (Malayalam), *Amrita Bazar Patrika* (English) to suffer the displeasure of the colonial state. But that did not prevent them from advocating the nationalist cause and demand an end to the colonial rule.

Box 7.1

- Though a few newspapers had been started by people before Raja Rammohun Roy, his *Sambad-Kaumudi* in Bengali published in 1821, and *Mirat-Ul-Akbar* in Persian published in 1822, were the first publications in India with a distinct nationalist and democratic approach.
- Fardoonji Murzban was the pioneer of the Gujarati Press in Bombay. It was as early as 1822 that he started the *Bombay Samachar* as a daily.
- Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar started the *Shome Prakash* in Bengali in 1858.
- *The Times of India* was founded in Bombay in 1861.
- *The Pioneer* in Allahabad in 1865.
- *The Madras Mail* in 1868.
- *The Statesman* in Calcutta in 1875.
- *The Civil and Military Gazette* in Lahore in 1876.

(Desai 1948)

Under British rule newspapers and magazines, films and radio comprised the range of mass media. Radio was wholly owned by the state. National views could not be, therefore, expressed. Newspapers and films though autonomous from the state were strictly monitored by the Raj. Newspapers and magazines either in English or vernacular were not very widely circulated as the literate public was limited. Yet their influence far out stripped their circulation as news and information was read and spread by word of mouth from commercial and administrative hubs, like markets and trading centres, as well as courts and towns. The print media carried a range of opinions, which expressed their ideas of a 'free India'. These variations were carried over to independent India.

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7.2 Mass Media in Independent India

The Approach

In independent India, Jawaharlal Nehru, the first prime minister, called upon the media to function as the watchdog of democracy. The media was expected to spread the spirit of self-reliance and national development among the people. You will recall the general thrust of development in the early years of independence in India from your earlier chapters. The media was seen as a means to inform the people of the various developmental efforts. The media was also encouraged to fight against oppressive social practices like untouchability, child marriages, and ostracism of widows, as well as beliefs of witchcraft and faith healing. A rational, scientific ethos was to be promoted for the building of a modern industrial society. The Films Division of the government produced newsreels and documentaries. These were shown before the screening of films in every movie theatre, documenting the development process as directed by the state.

Activity 7.2

Ask anyone you know from a generation that grew up in the first two decades after independence about the documentaries that were routinely shown before the screening of films. Write down their recollections.

Radio

Radio broadcasting which commenced in India through amateur 'ham' broadcasting clubs in Kolkata and Chennai in the 1920s matured into a public broadcasting system in the 1940s during the World War II when it became a major instrument of propaganda for Allied forces in South-east Asia. At the time of independence there were only six radio stations located in the major cities catering primarily to an urban audience. By 1950, there were 5,46,200 radio licences all over India.

Amita Roy (later Malik) as disc jockey at All India Radio, Lucknow, 1944
Noted media person and film critic, Amita joined All India Radio in 1944 for a couple of years when there were few women in the field, later going on to broadcast with the BBC, CBC, and other international broadcasting organisations. Doyenne among women journalists, she is well known for her film, radio, and TV criticisms and columns in leading newspapers.

Courtesy: Amita Malik, New Delhi

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Since the media was seen as an active partner in the development of the newly free nation, the AIR's programmes consisted mainly of news, current affairs and discussions on development. Box 7.2 captures the spirit of those times.

Box 7.2

AIR's broadcasts did make a difference

In the 1960s, when the high yielding varieties of food crops, as a part of the Green Revolution, were introduced for the first time in the country. It was All India Radio which undertook a major countryside campaign on these crops on a sustained day-to-day basis for over 10 years from 1967.

For this purpose, special programmes on the high yielding varieties were formed in many stations of AIR all over the country. These programme units, manned by subject specialists, undertook field visits and recorded and broadcast first hand accounts of the farmers, who started growing the new varieties of paddy and wheat.

Source: B. R. Kumar "AIR's broadcasts did make a difference". The Hindu December 31st 2006.

Apart from All India Radio (AIR) broadcasts news there was Vividh Bharati, a channel for entertainment that was primarily broadcasting Hindi film songs on listeners' request. In 1957, AIR acquired the hugely popular channel *Vividh Bharati*, which soon began to carry sponsored programmes and advertisements and grew to become a money-spinning channel for AIR.

When India gained independence in 1947, All India Radio had an infrastructure of six radio stations, located in metropolitan cities. The country had 280,000 radio receiver sets for a population of 350 million people. After independence, the government gave priority to the expansion of the radio broadcasting infrastructure, especially in state capitals and in border areas. Over the years, AIR has developed a formidable infrastructure for radio broadcasting in India. It operates a three-tiered — national, regional, and local — service to cater to India's geographic, linguistic and cultural diversity.

The major constraint for the popularisation of radio initially was the cost of the radio set. The transistor revolution in the 1960s made the radio more accessible by making it mobile as battery operated sets and reducing the unit price substantially. In 2000, around 110 million households (two-thirds of all Indian households) were listening to radio broadcasts in 24 languages and 146 dialects. More than a third of them were rural households. As of today, the AIR has grown to 480 stations and 681 transmitters covering 99% of the population spread over 92% area of the country.

Box 7.3

Wars, tragedies and expansion of AIR

Interestingly, wars and tragedies have spurred AIR to expand its activities. The 1962 war with China prompted the launching of a 'talks' unit to put out a daily programme. In August 1971, with the Bangladesh crisis looming, the News Service Division introduced news on the hour, from 6 o' clock in the morning to midnight. It took another crisis, the tragic assassination of Rajeev Gandhi in 1991, for AIR to take one more step of having bulletins round the clock.

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Television

Television programming was introduced experimentally in India to promote rural development as early as 1959. Later, the Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE) broadcasted directly to community viewers in the rural areas of six states between August 1975 and July 1976. These instructional broadcasts were broadcast to 2,400 TV sets directly for four hours daily. Meanwhile, television stations were set up under Doordarshan in four cities (Delhi, Mumbai, Srinagar and Amritsar) by 1975. Three more stations in Kolkata, Chennai and Jalandhar were added within a year. Every broadcasting centre had its own mix of programmes, comprising news, children's and women's programmes, farmers' programmes as well as entertainment programmes.

Activity 7.3

Identify a cross section of people from an older generation. Find out from them what television programmes consisted of in the 1970s and 1980s? Did many of them have access to television?

As programmes become commercialised and were allowed to carry advertisements of their sponsors, a shift in the target audience was evident. Entertainment programmes grew and were directed to the urban consuming class. The advent of colour broadcasting during the 1982 Asian Games in Delhi and the rapid

Box 7.4

Hum Log: A Turning Point

Hum Log was India's first long-running soap opera... This pioneering programme utilised the entertainment-education strategy by intentionally placing educational content in this entertainment message.

Some 156 episodes of *Hum Log* were broadcast in Hindi for 17 months in 1984–85. The television programme promoted social themes, such as gender equality, small family size and national integration. At the end of each 22-minute episode, a famous Indian actor, Ashok Kumar, summarised the educational lessons from the episode in an epilogue of 30 to 40 seconds. Kumar connected the drama to viewers' everyday lives. For instance, he might comment on a negative character who is drunk and beats his wife by asking; "why do you think that people, like Basesar Ram drink too much, and then behave badly? Do you know anyone like this? What can be done to reduce the incidents of alcoholism? What can you do? *(Singhal and Rogers, 1989)*.

A study of *Hum Log*'s audience showed that a high degree of parasocial interaction occurred between the audience members and their favourite *Hum Log* characters. For example, many *Hum Log* viewers reported that they routinely adjusted their daily schedules to 'meet' their favourite character 'in the privacy of their living rooms'. Many other individuals reported talking to their favourite characters through the television sets; for instance, "Don't worry, Badki. Do not give up your dream of making a career".

Hum Log achieved audience ratings of 65 to 90 per cent in North India and between 20 and 45 per cent in South India. About 50 million individuals watched the average broadcast of *Hum Log*. One unusual aspect of this soap opera was the huge number of letters, over 400,000, that it attracted from viewers; so many that most of them could not be opened by *Doordarshan* officials. *(Singhal and Rogers 2001)*

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Box 7.5

The advertising carried by *Hum Log* promoted a new consumer product in India, *Maggi* 2-Minute noodles. The public rapidly accepted this new consumer product, suggesting the power of television commercials. Advertisers began to line up to purchase airtime for television advertising, and the commercialisation of Doordarshan began.

expansion of the national network led to rapid commercialisation of television broadcasting. During 1984–85, the number of television transmitters increased all over India, covering a large proportion of the population. It was also the time when indigenous soap operas, like *Hum Log* (1984–85) and *Buniyaad* (1986–87) were aired. They were hugely popular and attracted substantial advertising revenue for Doordarshan as did the broadcasting of the epics—*Ramayana* (1987–88) and *Mahabharata* (1988–90). Today, the situation of the television industry is like this — the Annual Report released by TRAI for the year 2015–16 clearly stated that India has the world's second largest TV market after China. As per industry estimates, as on March 2016, of the existing 2,841 million households, around 1,811 million have television sets, which provide services of cable TV, DTH and IPTV, in additon to a terrestrial TV network of Doordarshan.

Print Media

The beginnings of the print media and its role in both the spread of the social reform movement and the nationalist movement have been noted. After Independence, the print media continued to share the general approach of being a partner in the task of nation building by taking up developmental issues, as well as, giving voice to the widest section of people. The brief extract in the following box will give you a sense of the commitment.

Box 7.6

Journalism in India used to be regarded as a 'calling'. Fired by the spirit of patriotic and social reforming idealism, it was able to draw in outstanding talent as the freedom struggle and movements for social change intensified and as new educational and career opportunities arose in a modernising society. As is often the case with such pursuits, the calling was conspicuously underpaid. The transformation of the calling into a profession took place over a long period, mirroring the change in character of a newspaper like *The Hindu* from a purely societal and public service mission into a business enterprise framed by a societal and public service mission.

Source: Editorial 'Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow', *The Hindu, 13 September 2003, quoted in B.P. Sanjay (2006)*

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The gravest challenge that the media faced was with the declaration of Emergency in 1975 and censorship of the media. Fortunately, the period ended and democracy was restored in 1977. India with its many problems can be justifiably proud of a free media.

At the start of the chapter we had mentioned how mass media is different from other means of communication as it requires a formal structural organisation to meet large scale capital, production and management demands. And also like any other social institution, the mass media also varies in structure and content according to different economic, political and socio-cultural context. You will now notice how at different points in time both the content and style of media changes. At some points, the state has a greater role to play. At other times the market does. In India this shift is very visible in recent times. This change has also led to debates about what role the media ought to play in a modern democracy. We look at these new developments in the next section.

7.3 Globalisation and the Media

We have already read about the far reaching impact of globalisation as well as its close link with the communication revolution in the last chapter. The media have always had international dimensions – such as the gathering of new stories and the distribution of primarily western films overseas. However, until the 1970s most media companies operated within specific domestic markets in accordance with regulations from national governments. The media industry was also differentiated into distinct sectors – for the most part, cinema, print media, radio and television broadcasting all operated independently of one another.

Box 7.7

Globalisation and the case of music

It has been argued that the musical form is one that lends itself to globalisation more efficiently than any other. This is because music is able to reach people who may not know the written and spoken language. The growth of technology — from personal stereo systems to music television (such as the MTV) to the compact disc (CD) — have provided newer, more sophisticated ways for music to be distributed globally.

The fusion of forms of media

Although the music industry is becoming ever more concentrated in the hands of a few international conglomerates, some feel that it is under a great threat. This is because the Internet allows music to be downloaded digitally, rather than purchased in the form of CDs or cassettes from local music stores. The global music industry currently comprises a complex network of factories, distribution chains, music shops and sales staff. If the Internet removes the need for all these elements by allowing music to be marketed and downloaded directly, what will be left of the music industry? How do you see the influence of mobile applications on music industry?

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In the past three decades, however, profound transformations have taken place within the media industry. National markets have given way to a fluid global market, while new technologies have led to the fusion of forms of media that were once distinct.

We began with the case of the music industry and the far reaching consequences that globalisation has had on it. The changes that have taken place in mass media is so immense that this chapter will probably be only able to give you a fragmentary understanding. As a young generation you can build up on the information provided. Let us have a look at the changes that globalisation has brought about on the print media (primarily newspapers and magazines), the electronic media (primarily television), and on the radio.

Print Media

We have seen how important newspapers and magazines were for the spread of the freedom movement. It is often believed that with the growth of the television and the Internet, the print media would be sidelined. However, in India, we have seen the circulation of newspapers grow. As Box 7.8 suggests, new technologies have helped boost the production and circulation of newspapers. A large number of glossy magazines have also made their entry to the market.

As is evident, the reasons for this amazing growth in Indian language newspapers are many. *First*, there is a rise in the number of literate people who are migrating to cities. The Hindi daily *Hindustan* in 2003 printed 64,000 copies of their Delhi edition, which jumped to 425,000 by 2005. The reason

Box 7.8

The Indian Language Newspaper Revolution

The most significant happening in the last few decades has been the Indian language newspaper revolution. Hindi, Telugu and Kannada recorded the highest growth. Print publications in the country had an increase in the average daily circulation of 23.7 million copies from 2006 to 2016. From 39.1 million in 2006, the average number of copies circulated a day grew to 62.8 million, a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 4.87 per cent from 2006 to 2016. Among the four main geographic zones, the north showed the highest growth at 7.83 per cent. Growth in the south, west and east was 4.95 per cent, 2.81 per cent and 2.63 per cent, respectively. The top two Hindi dailies in India are *Dainik Jagran* and *Dainik Bhaskar* with average qualifying sales of 3.92 million and 3.81 million, respectively (July–December 2016).

Source: Audit Bureau of Circulation, 2016–17.

The *Eenadu* story also exemplifies the success of the Indian language press. Ramoji Rao the founder of *Eenadu*, had successfully organised a chit-fund before launching the paper in 1974. By associating with appropriate causes in rural areas, like the anti-arrack movement in the mid-1980s, the Telugu newspaper was able to reach the countryside. This prompted it to launch 'district dailies' in 1989. These were tabloid inserts or features carrying sensational news from particular districts, as well as, classified advertisements from villages and small towns of the area. By 1998, *Eenadu* was being published from 10 towns in Andhra Pradesh and its circulation accounted for 70 per cent of the audited Telugu daily circulation.

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was that, of Delhi's population of one crore and forty-seven lakhs, 52 per cent had come from the Hindi belt of the two states of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. Out of this, 47 per cent have come from a rural background and 60 per cent of them are less than 40 years of age.

Second, the needs of the readers in the small towns and villages are different from that of the cities and the Indian language newspapers cater to those needs. Dominant Indian language newspapers such as *Malayala Manorama* and the *Eenadu* launched the concept of local news in a significant manner by introducing district and whenever necessary, block editions. *Dina Thanthi*, another leading Tamil newspaper, has always used simplified and colloquial language. The Indian language newspapers have adopted advanced printing technologies and also attempted supplements, pullouts, and literary and niche booklets. Marketing strategies have also marked the *Dainik Bhaskar* group's growth as they carry out consumer contact programmes, door-to-door surveys, and research. This also brings back the point that modern mass media has to have a formal structural organisation.

Box 7.9

Shift in circulation of Newspapers in India

According to recently published data of Indian Readership Survey, the largest growth in readership has been in Hindi belt. Indian language dailies as a whole have grown substantially from 191 million readers to 425 million readers in 2019. The readership of English dailies on the other hand, has stagnated at around 31 million. In 2005, Hindi dailies—*Dainik Jagran* (with 74 million) and *Dainik Bhaskar* (with 51 million) are heading the list, while *The Times of India* and *The Hindu* are the English dailies with a readership of over 15.2 and 5.3 million respectively. Of the top 10 dailies which are in 'ten million club', six are in Hindi, one in Tamil, two in Malayalam and one in English (http://mruc.net).

While English newspapers, often called 'national dailies', circulate across regions, vernacular newspapers have vastly increased their circulation in the states and the rural hinterland. In order to compete with the electronic media, newspapers, especially English language newspapers have on the one hand reduced prices and on the other hand brought out editions from multiple centres.

Activity 7.4

- Find out how many places do the newspaper you are most familiar with, brought out from.
- Have you noticed how there are supplements that cater to city specific or town specific interests and events?
- Have you noticed the many commercial supplements that accompany many newspapers these days?

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Box 7.10

Changes in Newspaper Production: The Role of Technology

From the late 1980s and early 1990s, newspapers have become fully automatic — from reporter's desk to final page proof. The use of paper has been completely eliminated with this automated chain. This has become possible because of two technological changes — networking of personal computers (PCs) through LANs (local area networks) and use of newsmaking softwares like Newsmaker and other customised softwares.

Changing technology has also changed the role and function of a reporter. The basic tools of a news reporter — a shorthand notebook, pen, typewriter and a plain old telephone has been replaced by new tools — a mini digital recorder, a laptop or a PC, mobile or satellite phone, and other accessories, like modem, dish and Antenna. All these technological changes in news gathering have increased the speed of news and helped newspaper managements push their deadlines to dawn. They are also able to plan a greater number of editions and provide the latest news to readers. A number of language newspapers are using new technologies to bring out separate editions for each of the districts. While print centres are limited, the number of editions has grown manifold.

Newspaper chains like Meerut-based *Amar Ujala,* are using new technology for news gathering, as well as, for improving pictorial coverage. The newspaper has a network of nearly a hundred reporters and staffers and an equal number of photographers, feeding news to all its 13 editions spread across Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand. All hundred correspondents are equipped with PCs and modems for news transmission, and the photographers carry digital cameras with them. Digital images are sent to the central news desk via modems.

Many feared that the rise in electronic media would lead to a decline in the circulation of print media. This has not happened. Indeed it has expanded. This process has, however, often involved cuts in prices and increasing dependence on the sponsors of advertisements who in turn have a larger say in the content of newspapers. The following box captures the logic of this practice.

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Box 7.11

The effort of the newspapers has been to widen their audience and reach out to different groups. It has been argued that newspaper reading habits have changed. While the older people read the newspaper in its entirety, younger readers often have specific interests like sports, entertainment or society gossip and directly move to the pages earmarked for these items. Segmented interest of readers imply that a newspaper must have a plurality of 'stories' to appeal to a wide range of readers with varied interests. This has often led to newspapers advocating infotainment, a combination of information and entertainment to sustain the interest of readers. Production of newspaper is no longer related to a commitment to certain values that embody a tradition. Newspapers have become a consumer product and as long as numbers are big, everything is up for sale.

Exercise for Box 7.11

Read the text carefully.

1. Do you think readers have changed or newspapers have changed? Discuss.
2. Discuss the term infotainment. Can you think of examples? What do you think the effect of infotainment will be?

A television showroom

Television

In 1991 there was one state controlled TV channel Doordarshan in India. By 1998 there were almost 70 channels. Privately run satellite channels have multiplied rapidly since the mid-1990s. While Doordarshan broadcasts over 35 channels there were about 900 private television networks broadcasting in 2020. The staggering growth of private satellite television has been one of the defining developments of contemporary India. In 2002, 134 million individuals watched satellite TV on an average every week. This number went up to 190 million in 2005. The number of homes with access to satellite TV has jumped from 40 million in 2002 to 61 million in 2005. Satellite subscription has now penetrated 56 percent of all TV homes.

The Gulf War of 1991 (which popularised CNN), and the launching of Star-TV in the same year by the Whampoa Hutchinson Group of Hong Kong, signalled the arrival of private satellite Channels in India. In 1992, Zee TV, a Hindi-based satellite entertainment channel, also began beaming programmes to cable television viewers in India. By 2000, 40 private cable and satellite channels were available including several that focused exclusively on regional-language broadcasting like Sun-TV, Eenadu-TV, Udaya-TV, Raj-TV, and Asianet. Meanwhile, Zee TV has also launched several regional networks, broadcasting in Marathi, Bengali and other languages.

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While Doordarshan was expanding rapidly in the 1980s, the cable television industry was mushrooming in major Indian cities. The VCR greatly multiplied entertainment options for Indian audiences, providing alternatives to Doordarshan's single channel programming. Video viewing at home and in community-based parlours increased rapidly. The video fare consisted mostly of film-based entertainment, both domestic and imported. By 1984, entrepreneurs in cities such as Mumbai and Ahmedabad had begun wiring apartment buildings to transmit several films a day. The number of cable operators exploded from 100 in 1984, to 1200 in 1988, to 15,000 in 1992, and to about 60,000 in 1999.

The coming in of transnational television companies like Star TV, MTV, Channel [V], Sony and others, made some people get worried on the likely impact on Indian youth and on the Indian cultural identity. But most of the transnational television channels have through research realised that the use of the familiar is more effective in procuring the diverse groups that constitute Indian audience. The early strategy of Sony International was to broadcast 10 Hindi films a week, gradually decreasing the number as the station produced its own Hindi language content. The majority of the foreign networks have now introduced either a segment of Hindi language programming (MTV India), or an entire new Hindi language channel (STAR Plus). STAR Sports and ESPN have

Box 7.12

The Rescue of Prince

Prince, a 5-year old boy had fallen into a 55-ft borewell shaft in Aldeharhi village in Kurukshetra, Haryana, and was rescued by the army after a 50-hour ordeal, in which a parallel shaft was dug through a well. Along with food, a closed circuit television camera (CCTV) had been lowered into the shaft in which the little boy was trapped. Two news channels… suspended all other programmes and reporting of all other events and for two days continuous footage of the child bravely fighting off insects, sleeping or crying out to his mother was splashed on the TV screens. They even interviewed many people outside temples, asking them "what do you feel about Prince?" They asked people to send SMSes for Prince. (Prince ke liye aapka sandesh hamein bheje xxx pe). Thousands of people had descended at the site and several free community kitchens were run for two days. It soon created a national hysteria and concern, and people were shown praying in temples, mosques, churches and gurudwaras. There are other such instances when the TV is shown to intrude into the personal lives of people.

Exercise for Box 7.12

You may have watched on television the whole rescue operation. If not you can choose from any other event. Organise a debate in class around the following points:

1. What is the likely impact of this competition among television channels to outdo one another in running exclusive live coverage of events for gaining higher viewership?
2. Can we look at this issue as a kind of voyeurism (peep into some other people's private/intimate moments) indulged in by television cameras?
3. Is it an example of the positive role played by television media in highlighting the plight of rural poor?

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dual commentary or an audio sound track in Hindi. The larger players have launched specific regional channels in languages such as Bengali, Punjabi, Marathi and Gujarati.

Perhaps the most dramatic adoption of localisation was carried out by STAR TV. In October 1996, STAR Plus, initially an all English general entertainment channel originating from Hong Kong, began producing a Hindi language belt of programming between 7 and 9 PM. By February 1999, the channel was converted to a solely Hindi Channel and all English serials shifted to STAR World, the network's English language international channel. Advertising to promote the change included the Hinglish slogan: 'Aapki Boli. Aapka Plus Point' (Your language/speech. Your Plus Point) (Butcher, 2003). Both STAR and Sony continued to dub US programming for younger audience as children appeared to be able to adjust to the peculiarities that arise when the language is one and the setting another. Have you watched a dubbed programme? What do you feel about it?

Most television channels are on throughout the day, 24×7. The format for news is lively and informal. News has been made far more immediate, democratic and intimate. Television has fostered public debate and is expanding its reach every passing year. This brings us to the question whether serious political and economic issues are neglected.

There is a growing number of news channels in Hindi and English, a large number of regional channels and an equally large number of reality shows, talk shows, Bollywood shows, family soaps, interactive shows, game shows and comedy shows. Entertainment television has produced a new cadre of superstars who have become familiar household names, and their private life, rivalry on sets feed the gossip columns of popular magazines and newspapers. Reality shows like *Kaun Banega Crorepati* or *Indian Idol* or *Bigg Boss* have become increasingly popular. Most of these are modelled along the lines of western programmes. Which of these programmes can be identified as interactive shows, as family soaps, talk shows and reality shows? Discuss.

Radio

In 2000, AIR's programmes could be heard in two-third of all Indian households in 24 languages and 146 dialects, over some 120 million radio sets. The advent of privately owned FM radio stations in 2002 provided a boost to entertainment programmes over radio. In order to attract audiences, these

Box 7.13

Soap opera

Soap operas are stories that are serialised. They are continuous. Individual stories may come to an end, and different characters appear and disappear, but the soap itself has no ending until it is taken off the air completely. Soap operas presume a history, which the regular viewer knows – he or she becomes familiar with the characters, with their personalities and their life experiences.

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privately run radio stations sought to provide entertainment to its listeners. As privately run FM channels are not permitted to broadcast any political news bulletins, many of these channels specialise in 'particular kinds' of popular music to retain their audiences. One such FM channel claims that it broadcasts 'All hits all day!' Most of the FM channels which are popular among young urban professionals and students, often belong to media conglomerates. Like 'Radio Mirchi' belongs to the *Times of India* group, *Red FM* is owned by *Living Media* and *Radio City* by the *Star Network*. But independent radio stations engaged in public broadcastings like National Public Radio (USA) or BBC (UK) are missing from our broadcasting landscape.

Can you talk your walk? GenZ has tuned into a new career

RADIO GA GA!

Mallvika Nanda

I'd sit alone and watch your light, My only friend through teenage nights, And everything I had to know, I heard it on my radio... You had your time you had the power, You're yet to have your finest hour, Radio... Radio Ga Ga...

Long ago when Queen's Freddie Mercury sung *Radio Ga Ga*, maybe it was a subtle reference to the finest hour which we are witnessing now – the radio boom which is loud and clear. This boom has made radio jockeying the coolest career option for the hip and happening GenZ. And if seeing is believing, the incessant rush of wannabe RJ's who thronged the Fever 104 stall at the recently held **HT Youth Nexus** made our conviction further stronger. The fever is certainly on the rise.

It's the right choice

But what has made RJ-ing the coolest choice? Perhaps, it is the rising level of awareness among youngsters, who want something more and extraordinary when it comes to career. No run-of-the mill stuff for them because they are willing to risk and experiment. As actress Preity Zinta, who was an RJ in

In the two films: 'Rang de Basanti' and 'Lage Raho Munnai Bhai', the radio is used as an active medium of communication although both the movies are set in the contemporary period. In 'Rang de Basanti', the conscientious, angry college youth, inspired by the legend of Bhagat Singh assassinates a minister and then captures All India Radio to reach out to the people and disseminate their message. While in 'Lage Raho Munna Bhai', the heroine is a radio jockey who wakes up the country with her hearty and full-throated "Good Morning Mumbai!", the hero too takes recourse to the radio station to save a girl's life.

The potential for using FM channels is enormous. Further privatisation of radio stations and the emergence of community owned radio stations would lead to the growth of radio stations. The demand for local news is growing. The number of homes listening to FM in India has also reinforced the worldwide trend of networks getting replaced by local radio. The box below reveals not only the ingenuity of a village youth but also the need for catering to local cultures.

Box 7.14

It may well be the only village FM radio station on the Asian sub-continent.

The transmission equipment, costing little..., may be the cheapest in the world. But the local people definitely love it. On a balmy morning in India's northern state of Bihar, young Raghav Mahato gets ready to fire up his home-grown FM radio station. Thousands of villagers, living in a 20 km (12 miles) radius of Raghav's small repair shop and radio station ...tune their ... radio sets to catch their favourite station. After the crackle of static, a young, confident voice floats up the radio waves. "Good morning! Welcome to Raghav FM Mansoorpur 1! Now listen to your favourite songs," announces anchor and friend Sambhu into a cellotape-plastered microphone surrounded by racks of local music tapes. For the next 12 hours, Raghav Mahato's outback FM radio station plays films songs and broadcasts public interest messages on HIV and polio, and even snappy local news, including alerts on missing children and the opening of local shops. Raghav and his friend run the indigenous radio station out of Raghav's thatched-roof Priya Electronics Shop.

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The place is a cramped …rented shack stacked with music tapes and rusty electrical appliances which doubles up as Raghav's radio station and repair shop.

He may not be literate, but Raghav's ingenuous FM station has made him more popular than local politicians. Raghav's love affair with the radio began in 1997 when he started out as a mechanic in a local repair shop. When the shop owner left the area, Raghav, son of a cancer-ridden farm worker, took over the shack with his friend. Sometime in 2003, Raghav, who by now had learned much about radio ...In impoverished Bihar state, where many areas lack power supplies, the cheap battery-powered transistor remains the most popular source of entertainment. "It took a long time to come up with the idea and make the kit which could transmit my programmes at a fixed radio frequency. The kit cost me 50 rupees", says Raghav. The transmission kit is fitted on to an antenna attached to a bamboo pole on a neighbouring three-storey hospital. A long wire connects the contraption to a creaky, old homemade stereo cassette player in Raghav's radio shack. Three other rusty, locally made battery-powered tape recorders are connected to it with colourful wires and a cordless microphone.

The shack has some 200 tapes of local Bhojpuri, Bollywood and devotional songs, which Raghav plays for his listeners. Raghav's station is truly a labour of love - he does not earn anything from it. His electronic repair shop work brings him some two thousand rupees a month. The young man, who continues to live in a shack with his family, doesn't know that running an FM station requires a government license. "I don't know about this. I just began this out of curiosity and expanded its area of transmission every year," he says.

So when some people told him sometime ago that his station was illegal, he actually shut it down. But local villagers thronged his shack and persuaded him to resume services again. It hardly matters for the locals that Raghav FM Mansoorpur 1 does not have a government license – they just love it.

"Women listen to my station more than men", he says. "Though Bollywood and local Bhojpuri songs are staple diet, I air devotional songs at dawn and dusk for women and old people." Since there's no phone-in facility, people send their requests for songs through couriers carrying handwritten messages and phone calls to a neighbouring public telephone office. Raghav's fame as the 'promoter' of a radio station has spread far and wide in Bihar. People have written to him, wanting work at his station, and evinced interest in buying his 'technology'.

Source: BBC NEWS: (By Amarnath Tewary) http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/south_asia/4735642.stm Published: 2006/02/24 11:34:36 GMT © BBC MMV

Conclusion

That mass media is an essential part of our personal and public life today cannot be emphasised enough. This chapter in no way can capture your life experience with the media. What it does do is attempt to understand it as an important part of contemporary society. It also seeks to focus on its many dimensions – its link with the state and the market, its social organisation and management, its relationship with readers and audience. In other words it looks at both the constraints within which media operates and the many ways that it affects our lives.

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Questions

1. Trace out the changes that have been occurring in the newspaper industry. What is your opinion on these changes?
2. Is radio as a medium of mass communication dying out? Discuss the potential that FM stations have in post-liberalisation India.
3. Trace the changes that have been happening in the medium of television. Discuss.

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Notes

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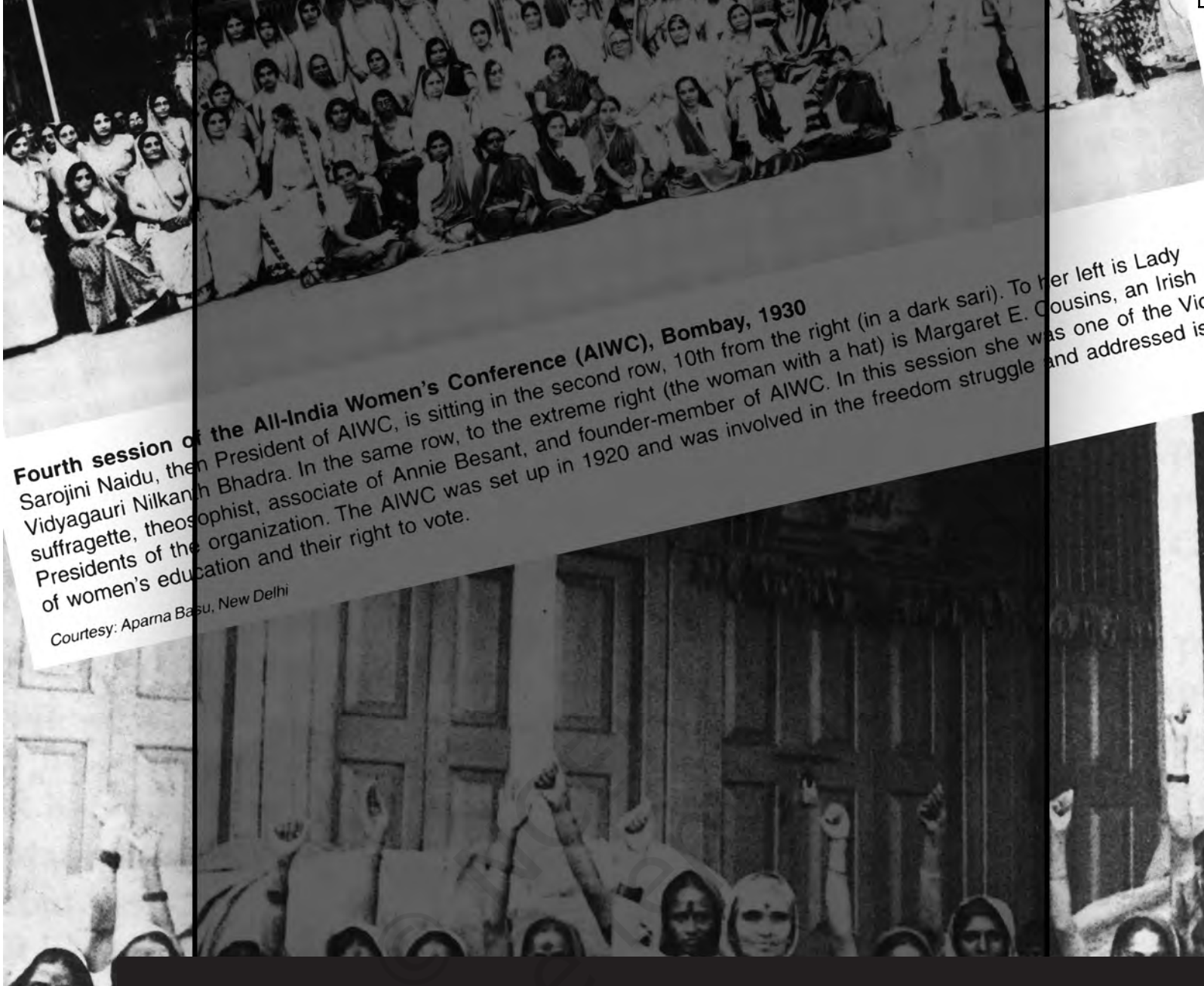

Fourth session of the All-India Women's Conference (AIWC), Bombay, 1930
Sarojini Naidu, then President of AIWC, is sitting in the second row, 10th from the right (in a dark sari). To her left is Lady Vidyagauri Nilkanth Bhadra. In the same row, to the extreme right (the woman with a hat) is Margaret E. Cousins, an Irish suffragette, theosophist, associate of Annie Besant, and founder-member of AIWC. In this session she was one of the Vice Presidents of the organization. The AIWC was set up in 1920 and was involved in the freedom struggle and addressed issues of women's education and their right to vote.

Courtesy: Aparna Basu, New Delhi

8 Social Movements

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A great many students and office-workers around the world go to work only for five or six days and rest on the weekends. Yet, very few people who relax on their day off realise that this holiday is the outcome of a long struggle by workers. That the work-day should not exceed eight hours, that men and women should be paid equally for doing the same work, that workers are entitled to social security and pension — these and many other rights were gained through social movements. Social movements have shaped the world we live in and continue to do so.

Box 8.1

The Right to Vote

Universal adult franchise, or the right of every adult to vote, is one of the foremost rights guaranteed by the Indian Constitution. It means that we cannot be governed by anyone other than the people we have ourselves elected to represent us. This right is a radical departure from the days of colonial rule when ordinary people were forced to submit to the authority of colonial officers who represented the interests of the British Crown. However, even in Britain, not everyone was allowed to vote. Voting rights were limited to property-owning men. *Chartism* was a social movement for parliamentary representation in England. In 1839, more than 1.25 million people signed the People's Charter asking for universal male suffrage, voting by ballot, and the right to stand for elections without owning property. In 1842, the movement managed to collect 3.25 million signatures, a huge number for a tiny country. Yet, it was only after World War I, in 1918 that all men over 21, married women, women owning houses, and women university graduates over the age of 30, got the right to vote. When the *suffragettes* (women activists) took up the cause of all adult women's right to vote, they were bitterly opposed and their movement violently crushed.

ACTIVITY 8.1

Compare your life with your grandmother. How is it different from yours? What are the rights you take for granted in your life and which she did not have? Discuss.

We often assume that the rights we enjoy just happened to exist. It is important to recall the struggles of the past, which made these rights possible. You have read about the 19th century social reform movements, of the struggles against caste and gender discrimination and of the nationalist movement in India that brought us independence from colonial rule in 1947. You are familiar also with the many nationalist movements around the world in Asia, Africa and Americas that put an end to colonial rule. The socialist movements world over, the civil rights movement in the United States in the 1950s and 1960s that fought for equal rights for Blacks, the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa have all changed the world in fundamental ways. Social movements not

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only change societies; they also inspire other social movements. You saw in Chapter 3 how the Indian national movement shaped the making of the Indian Constitution. And how in turn the Indian Constitution played a major role in bringing about social change.

ACTIVITY 8.2

Try and think of any example that will show you how society is changed by social movements and also how a social movement can lead to other social movements.

8.1 FEATURES OF A SOCIAL MOVEMENT

A social movement requires *sustained collective action* over time. Such action is often directed against the state and takes the form of demanding changes in state policy or practice. Spontaneous, disorganised protest cannot be called a social movement either. Collective action must be marked by some degree of *organisation*. This organisation may include a *leadership* and a *structure* that defines how members relate to each other, make decisions and carry them out. Those participating in a social movement also have *shared objectives* and *ideologies*. A social movement has a general orientation or way of approaching to bring about (or to prevent) change. These defining features are not constant. They may change over the course of a social movement's life.

Social movements often arise with *the aim of bringing about changes on a public issue*, such as ensuring the right of the tribal population to use the forests or the right of displaced people to settlement and compensation. Think of other issues that social movements have taken up in the past and present. While social movements seek to bring in social change, *counter movements* sometimes arise in defence of status quo. There are many instances of such counter movements. When Raja Rammohun Roy campaigned against *sati* and formed the Brahmo Samaj, defenders of *sati* formed Dharma Sabha and petitioned the British not to legislate against *sati*. When reformers demanded education for girls, many protested that this would be disastrous for society. When reformers campaigned for widow remarriage, they were socially boycotted. When the so called 'lower caste' children enrolled in schools, some so called 'upper caste' children were withdrawn from the schools by their families. Peasant movements have often been brutally suppressed. More recently the social movements of erstwhile excluded groups, like the Dalits, have often invoked retaliatory action. Likewise proposals for extending reservation in educational institutions have led to counter movements opposing them. Social movements cannot change society easily. Since it goes against both entrenched interests and values, there is bound to be opposition and resistance. But over a period of time changes do take place.

While protest is the most visible form of collective action, a social movement also acts in other, equally important ways. Social movement

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Activity 8.3

Make a list of different social movements that you have heard or read of. What changes do they want to bring about? What changes do they want to prevent?

activists hold meetings to mobilise people around the issues that concern them. Such activities help *shared understanding,* and also prepare for a feeling of agreement or consensus about how to pursue the collective agenda. Social movements also chart out campaigns that include lobbying with the government, media and other important makers of public opinion. You will recall this discussion from Chapter 3. Social movements also *develop distinct modes of protest*. This could be candle and torch light processions, use of black cloth, street theatres, songs, poetry. Gandhi adopted novel ways such as *ahimsa*, *satyagraha* and his use of the *charkha* in the freedom movement. Recall the innovative modes of protest such as picketing and defying of the colonial ban on producing salt.

Box 8.2

The repertoire of satyagraha

The fusion of foreign power and capital was the focus of social protest during India's nationalist struggle. Mahatma Gandhi wore *khadi*, hand-spun, hand-woven cloth, to support Indian cotton-growers, spinners and weavers whose livelihoods had been destroyed by the government policy of favouring mill-made cloth. The legendary *Dandi March* to make salt was a protest against British taxation policies that placed a huge burden on the consumers of basic commodities in order to benefit the empire. Gandhi took items of everyday mass consumption like cloth and salt, and transformed them into symbols of resistance.

Breaking the Salt Laws, 1930
As part of civil disobedience Gandhi chose to break the Salt Laws as a mode of protest. In the first photograph, women are seen bearing pots containing brine on their way to the salt pans.

Photograph courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi

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Distinguishing Social Change and Social Movements

It is important to distinguish between *social change* in general and *social movements*. Social change is continuous and ongoing. The broad historical processes of social change are the sum total of countless individual and collective actions gathered across time and space. Social movements are directed towards some specific goals. It involves long and continuous social effort and action by people. To draw from our discussion in Chapter 2, we can view sanskritisation and westernisation as social changes and see the 19th century social reformers' efforts to change the society as social movements.

8.2 Sociology and Social Movements

Why the Study of Social Movements is Important for Sociology

From the very beginning, the discipline of sociology has been interested in social movements. The French Revolution was the violent culmination of several movements aimed at overthrowing the monarchy and establishing 'liberty, equality and fraternity'. In Britain, the industrial revolution was marked by great social upheaval. Recall our discussion on the emergence of sociology in the west in NCERT Class XI textbook *Introducing Sociology*. Poor labourers and artisans who had left the countryside to find work in the cities protested against the inhuman living conditions into which they were forced. Food riots in England were often suppressed by the government. These protests were perceived by elites as a major threat to the established order of society. Their anxiety about maintaining social order was reflected in the work of sociologist *Emile Durkheim*. Durkheim's writings about the division of labour in society, forms of religious life, and even suicide, mirror his concern about how social structures enable social integration. Social movements were seen as forces that led to disorder.

Scholars influenced by the ideas of *Karl Marx* offered a different view of violent collective action. Historians like E. P. Thompson showed that the 'crowd' and the 'mob' were not made up of anarchic hooligans out to destroy society. Instead, they too had a 'moral economy'. In other words, they have their own shared understanding of right and wrong that informed their actions. Their research showed that poor people in urban areas had good reasons for protesting. They often resorted to public protest because they had no other way of expressing their anger and resentment against deprivation.

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8.3 Types of Social Movements

Reformist, Redemptive, Revolutionary

There are different kinds of social movements. They can be classified as: (i) redemptive or transformatory; (ii) reformist; and (iii) revolutionary. A *redemptive* social movement aims to bring about a change in the personal consciousness and actions of its individual members. For instance, people in the Ezhava community in Kerala were led by Narayana Guru to change their social practices. *Reformist* social movements strive to change the existing social and political arrangements through gradual, incremental steps. The 1960s movement for the reorganisation of Indian states on the basis of language and the recent *Right to Information* campaign are examples of reformist movements. *Revolutionary* social movements attempt to radically transform social relations, often by capturing state power. The Bolshevik revolution in Russia that deposed the Tsar to create a communist state and the Naxalite movement in India that seeks to remove oppressive landlords and state officials can be described as revolutionary movements.

As you might discover when you try to classify a social movement in terms of this typology, most movements have a mix of redemptive, reformist and revolutionary elements. Or the orientation of a social movement may shift over time such that it starts off with, say, revolutionary objectives and becomes reformist. A movement may start from a phase of mass mobilisation and collective protest to become more institutionalised. Social scientists who study the life cycles of social movements call this a move towards '*social movement organisations*'.

How a social movement is perceived and classified is always a matter of interpretation. It differs from one section to another. For instance, what was a 'mutiny' or 'rebellion' for British colonial rulers in 1857 was 'the first war of Independence' for Indian nationalists. A mutiny is an act of defiance against supposedly legitimate authority, i.e., the British rule. A struggle for independence is a challenge to the very legitimacy of British rule. This shows how people attach different meanings to social movements.

Distinguishing the New Social Movement from the Old Social Movements

Working class movements in the capitalist west were wresting better wages, better living conditions, social security, free schooling and health security from the state. That was also a period when socialist movements were establishing new kinds of states and societies. *The old social movements clearly saw reorganisation of power relations as a central goal.*

The *old social movements functioned within the frame of political parties*. The Indian National Congress led the Indian National Movement. The Communist

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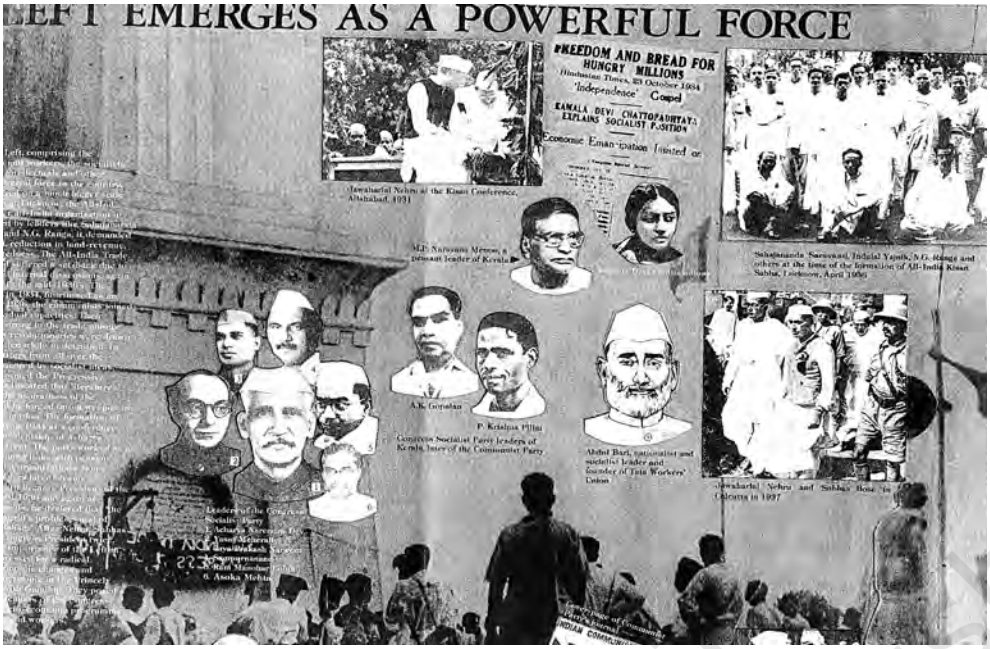

Party of China led the Chinese Revolution. Today some believe that 'old' class-based political action led by trade unions and workers' parties is on the decline. Others argued that in the affluent West with its welfare state, issues of class-based exploitation and inequality were no longer central concerns. So *the 'new' social movements were not about changing the distribution of power in society but about quality-of-life issues such as having a clean environment.*

In the old social movements, *the role of political parties* was central. Political scientist Rajni Kothari attributes the surge of social movements in India in the 1970s to people's growing dissatisfaction with parliamentary democracy. Kothari argues that the institutions of the state have been captured by elites. Due to this, electoral representation by political parties is no longer an effective way for the poor to get their voices heard. People left out by the formal political system join social movements or *non-party political formations* in order to put pressure on the state from outside. Today, the broader term of civil society is used to refer to both old social movements represented by political parties and trade unions and to new non-governmental organisations, women's groups, environmental groups and tribal activists.

As you read about the various dimensions of social change in India, you would have been struck by the fact that *globalisation* has been re-shaping peoples' lives in industry and agriculture, culture and media. Often firms are transnational. Often legal arrangements that are binding are international such as the regulations of the World Trade Organisation (WTO). Environmental and health risks, fears of nuclear warfare are global in nature. Not surprisingly *therefore many of the new social movements are international in scope.* What is significant, however, is that the old and new movements are working together in new alliances such as the World Social Forum that have been raising awareness about the hazards of globalisation.

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New social movements are *not just about 'old' issues of economic inequality*. Nor are they organised along class lines alone. *Identity politics, cultural anxieties* and *aspirations* are essential elements in creating social movements and occur in ways that are difficult to trace to class-based inequality. Often, these social movements unite participants across class boundaries. For instance, the women's movement includes urban, middle-class feminists as well as poor peasant women. The regional movements for separate statehood bring together different groups of people who do not share homogeneous class identities. In a social movement, questions of social inequality can occur alongside other, equally important, issues.

This will be clear when we discuss the Chipko movement in the next section.

8.4 Ecological Movements

For much of the modern period the greatest emphasis has been laid on development. Over the decades there has been a great deal of concern about the unchecked use of natural resources and a model of development that creates new needs that further demands greater exploitation of the already depleted natural resources. This model of development has also been critiqued for assuming that all sections of people will be beneficiaries of development. Thus big dams displace people from their homes and sources of livelihood. Industries displace agriculturalists from their homes and livelihood. The impact of industrial pollution is yet another story. Here we take just one example of an ecological movement to examine the many issues that are interlinked in an ecological movement.

Activity 8.4

Find out some instances of environmental pollution from your region. Discuss. You can also have a poster exhibition of all your findings.

Chipko activists gather on World Enviornment Day at Saklana in 1986

The Chipko Movement, an example of the ecological movement, in the Himalayan foothills is a good example of such intermingled interests and ideologies. According to Ramachandra Guha in his book, *Unquiet Woods*, villagers rallied together to save the oak and rhododendron forests near their villages. When government forest contractors came to cut down the trees, villagers, including large number of women, stepped forward to hug the trees to prevent their being felled. At stake was the question of villagers' subsistence. All of them relied on the forest to get firewood, fodder and other daily necessities.

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This conflict placed the livelihood needs of poor villagers against the government's desire to generate revenues from selling timber. The economy of subsistence was pitted against the economy of profit. Along with this issue of social inequality (villagers versus a government that represented commercial, capitalist interests), the Chipko Movement also raised the issue of ecological sustainability. Cutting down natural forests was a form of environmental destruction that had resulted in devastating floods and landslides in the region. For the villagers, these 'red' and 'green' issues were interlinked. While their survival depended on the survival of the forest, they also valued the forest for its own sake as a form of ecological wealth that benefits all. In addition, the Chipko Movement also expressed the resentment of hill villagers against a distant government headquartered in the plains that seemed indifferent and hostile to their concerns. So, concerns about economy, ecology and political representation underlay the Chipko Movement. Trees are necessary for the conservation of environment. Similarly, clean water is necessary for a healthy environment. In the light of this, the Government of India since 2014 has initiated systematic efforts to bring balance, structure and quality of India's ecology through the 'Integrated Ganga Conservation Mission' (*Namami Gange*) and '*Swachh Bharat Abhiyan'.*

Discussing deforestation, Junagadh, Himachal Pradesh

Box 8.3

Chipko Movement

The unusually heavy monsoon of 1970 precipitated the most devastating flood in living memory. In the Alaknanda valley, water inundated 100 square kilometres of land, washed away 6 metal bridges and 10 kilometres of motor roads, 24 buses and several other vehicles; 366 houses collapsed and 500 acres of standing paddy crops were destroyed. The loss of human and bovine life was considerable.

…The 1970 floods mark a turning-point in the ecological history of the region. Villagers, who bore the brunt of the damage, were beginning to perceive the hitherto tenuous links between deforestation, landslides and floods. It was observed that some of the villages most affected by landslides lay directly below forests where felling operations had taken place….

…The villagers' cause was taken up by the Dashauli Gram Swaraja Sangh (DGSS), a cooperative organisation based in Chamoli district.

…Despite these early protests, the government went ahead with the yearly auction of forests in November. One of the plots scheduled to be assigned was the Reni forest….

…The contractors' men who were travelling to Reni from Joshimath stopped the bus shortly before Reni. Skirting the village, they made for the forest. A small girl who spied the workers with their implements rushed to Gaura Devi, the head of the village Mahila Mandal (Women's Club). Gaura Devi quickly mobilised the other housewives and went to the forest. Pleading with the labourers not to start felling operations, the women initially met with abuse and threats. When the women refused to budge, the men were eventually forced to retire.

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Box 8.4

In our current information age, social movements around the globe are able to join together in huge regional and international networks comprising non-governmental organisations, religious and humanitarian groups, human rights association, consumer protection advocates, environmental activists and others who campaign in the public interest. …The enormous protests against the World Trade Organisation that took place in Seattle, for example, were organised in part through internet-based network.

8.5 Class Based Movements

Peasant Movements

Peasant movements or agrarian struggles have taken place from pre-colonial days. The movements in the period between 1858 and 1914 tended to remain localised, disjointed and confined to particular grievances. Well-known are the Bengal revolt of 1859-62 against the indigo plantation system and the 'Deccan riots' of 1857 against moneylenders. Some of these issues continued into the following period, and under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi became partially linked to the Independence movement. For instance, the Bardoli Satyagraha (1928, Surat District) a 'non-tax' campaign as part of the nationwide non-cooperation movement, a campaign of refusal to pay land revenue and the Champaran Satyagraha (1917–18) directed against indigo plantations. In the 1920s, protest movements against the forest policies of the British government and local rulers arose in certain regions. Recall our discussion on structural changes in Chapter 1.

Between 1920 and 1940 peasant organisations arose. The first organisation to be founded was the Bihar Provincial Kisan Sabha (1929), and in 1936 the All India Kisan Sabha. The peasants organised by the Sabhas demanded freedom from economic exploitation for peasants, workers and all other exploited classes. At the time of Independence, we had the two most classical cases of peasant movements, namely the Tebhaga movement (1946–47) and the Telangana movement (1946–51). The first was a struggle of sharecroppers in Bengal in North Bihar for two thirds share of their produce instead of the customary half. It had the support of the Kisan Sabha and the Communist Party of India (CPI). The second was directed against the feudal conditions in the princely state of Hyderabad and was led by the CPI.

New farmer's movements began in the 1970s in Punjab and Tamil Nadu. These movements were regionally oganised, were non-party, and involved farmers rather than peasants (farmers are said to be market-involved as both commodity producers and purchasers). The basic ideology of the movement was strongly anti-state and anti-urban. The focus of demand were 'price and related issues' (for example, price procurement, remunerative prices, prices for agricultural inputs, taxation, non-repayment of loans). Novel methods of agitation were used: blocking of roads and railways, refusing politicians' and

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Box 8.5

...the Siliguri subdivision peasants' conference proved to be a great success. The peasants, quickened and strengthened by their earlier militant struggles, looked forward expectantly. Faces deadened and dulled with the grinding routine of labour on the *jotedars*' fields in sun and rain glowed with hope and understanding. According to Kanu Sanyal's later claims, from March 1967 to April 1967, all the villagers were organised. From 15,000 to 20,000 peasants were enrolled as wholetime activists. Peasants' committees were formed in every village and they were transformed into armed guards. They soon occupied land in the name of peasants' committees, burnt all land records 'which had been used to cheat them of their dues', cancelled all hypothecary debts, passed death sentences on oppressive landlords, formed armed bands by looting guns from landlords, armed themselves with conventional weapons like bows, arrows and spears, and set up parallel administration to look after the villages...

Source: Sumanata Banerjee "Naxalbari and the Left Movement" in ed. Ghanshyam Shah Social Movements and the State (Sage, Delhi 2002) pp.125–192

Box 8.6

The guerrilla movement was heralded by the forcible cutting of crops from the land of a rich landlord at Garudabhadra, near Boddapadu in the plains area on 24 November 1968. More significant was the action in the hill tracts the next day, when in Pedagottili village of the Parvatipuram Agency area, about 250 Girijans from several villages armed with bows, arrows and spears... raided the house of a ...landlord cum moneylender... and took possession of his hoarded paddy, rice, other food grains and property worth about Rs. 20,000. They also seized documents.

bureaucrats' entry to villages, and so on. It has been argued that the farmers' movements have broadened their agenda and ideology and include environment and women's issues. Therefore, they can be seen as a part of the worldwide 'new social movements'.

Workers' Movements

Factory production began in India in the early part of the 1860s. You will recall our discussion on the specific character of industrialisation in the colonial period. The general pattern of trade set up by the colonial regime was one under which raw materials were procured from India and goods manufactured in the United Kingdom were marketed in the colony. These factories were, thus established in the port towns of Calcutta (Kolkata) and Bombay (Mumbai). Later factories were also set up in Madras (Chennai). Tea plantations in Assam were established as early as in 1839.

In the early stages of colonialism, labour was very cheap as the colonial government did not regulate either wages or working conditions. You will remember the manner in which the colonial government ensured supply of labour in the tea plantations (Chapter 1).

Though trade unions emerged later, workers did protest. Their actions then were, however, more spontaneous than sustained. Some of the nationalist leaders also drew in the workers into the anti-colonial movement. The war led

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Top: Bombay textile worker's strike 1981–82

Right: Women workers at a Union Demonstration, Arwal, Bihar 1987

Activity 8.5

Follow the news regularly and collect information on the issues that trade unions are taking up. Discuss in the context of globalisation.

to the expansion of industries in the country but it also brought a great deal of misery to the poor. There were food shortage and sharp increase in prices. There were waves of strikes in the textile mills in Bombay. In September and October 1917 there were around 30 recorded strikes. Jute workers in Calcutta struck work. In Madras, the workers of Buchingham and Carnatic Mills (Binny's) struck work demanding increase in wages. Textile workers in Ahmedabad struck work for increase in wages by 50 per cent (Bhowmick 2004).

The first trade union was established in April 1918 in Madras by B.P. Wadia, a social worker and member of the Theosophical Society. During the same year, Mahatma Gandhi founded the Textile Labour Association (TLA). In 1920, the All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) was formed in Bombay. The

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AITUC was a broad-based organisation involving diverse ideologies. The main ideological groups were the communists led by S.A. Dange and M.N. Roy, the moderates led by M. Joshi and V.V. Giri and the nationalist movements which involved people like Lala Lajpat Rai and Jawaharlal Nehru.

During the last few years of British rule the communists gained considerable control over the AITUC. The Indian National Congress chose to form another union called the Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC) in May 1947. The split in the AITUC in 1947 paved the way for further splits on the line of political parties. Apart from the working class movement being divided on the lines of political parties at the national level, regional parties too started to form their own unions from the late 1960s.

In 1966–67, the economy suffered a major recession which led to a decrease in production and consequently employment. There was a general unrest. In 1974 there was a major railway workers' strike. The confrontation between the state and trade unions became acute. The worker's moment was very much part of the wide struggle for civil liberties.

8.6 Caste Based Movements

The Dalit Movement

Social movements of Dalits show a particular character. The movements cannot be explained satisfactorily by reference to economic exploitations alone or political oppression, although these dimensions are important. This is a struggle for recognition as fellow human beings. It is a struggle for self-confidence and a space for self-determination. It is a struggle for abolishment of stigmatisation, that untouchability implied. It has been called a struggle to be touched.

The word Dalit is commonly used in Marathi, Hindi, Gujarati and many other Indian languages, meaning the poor and oppressed persons. It was first used in the new context in Marathi by neo-Buddhist activists, the followers of Babasaheb Ambedkar in the early 1970s. It refers to those who have been broken, ground down by those above them in a deliberate way. There is, in the word itself, inherent denial of pollution, karma and justified caste hierarchy.

There has not been a single, unified Dalit movement in the country now or in the past. Different movements have highlighted different issues related to Dalits, around different ideologies. However, all of them assert a Dalit identity though the meaning may not be identical or precise for everyone. Notwithstanding differences in the nature of Dalit movements and the meaning of identity,

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there has been a common quest for equality, self-dignity and eradication of untouchability (Shah 2001:194). This can be seen in the Satnami Movement of the Chamars in the Chattisgarh plains in eastern MP, Adi Dharma Movement in Punjab, the Mahar Movement in Maharashtra, the socio-political mobilisation among the Jatavas of Agra and the Anti-Brahman Movement in south India.

In the contemporary period, the Dalit movement has unquestionably acquired a place in the public sphere that cannot be ignored. This has been accompanied by a growing body of Dalit literature.

Dalit writers are insistent on using their own imageries and expressions rooted in their own experiences and perceptions. Many felt that the high-flown social imageries of mainstream society would hide the truth rather than reveal it. Dalit literature gives a call for social and cultural revolt. While some emphasise the cultural struggle for dignity and identity, others also bring in the structural features of society including the economic dimensions.

Box 8.7

Sociologists' attempts to classify Dalit movements have led them to believe that they belong to all the types, namely reformative, redemptive, revolutionary.

...the anti-caste movement which began in the 19th century under the inspiration of Jotiba Phule and was carried out in the 1920s by the non-Brahmin movements in Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu and then developed under the leadership of Dr. Ambedkar had characteristics of all types. At its best it was revolutionary in terms of society and redemptive in terms of individuals. In partial context, the 'post Ambedkar Dalit movement' has had revolutionary practice. It has provided alternative ways of living, at some points limited and at some points radical and all-encompassing, ranging from changes in behaviour such as giving up eating beef to religious conversion. It has focussed on changes in the entire society, from radical revolutionary goal of abolishing caste oppression and economic exploitation to the limited goals of providing scope for members of Scheduled Caste to achieve social mobility.

But on the whole...this movement has been a reformist movement. It has mobilized along caste lines, but only made half hearted efforts to destroy caste; it has attempted and achieved some real though limited societal changes with gains especially for the educated sections among Dalits, but it has failed to transform society sufficiently to raise the general mass from what is still among the most excruciating poverty in the world.

Backward Class Castes Movements

The emergence of backward castes/classes as political entities has occurred both in the colonial and post-colonial contexts. The colonial state often distributed patronage on the basis of caste. It made sense, therefore, for people to stay within their caste for social and political identity in institutional life. It also influenced similarly placed caste groups to unite themselves and to form what has been termed a 'horizontal stretch'. Caste, thus, began to lose its ritual content and become more and more secularised for political mobilisation (recall the discussion on secularisation in Chapter 2).

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The term 'Backward Classes' has been in use in different parts of the country since the late 19th Century. It began to be used more widely in Madras presidency since 1872, in the princely state of Mysore since 1918, and in Bombay presidency since 1925. From the 1920s, a number of organisations united around the issue of caste sprang up in different parts of the country. These included the United Provinces Hindu Backward Classes League, All-India Backward Classes Federation, All India Backward Classes League. In 1954, 88 organisations were counted working for the Backward Classes.

Box 8.8

The following observations were made by G.B. Pant during a speech that moved the constitution of the Advisory Committee on fundamental rights, minorities, etc.:

'We have to take particular care of the Depressed Classes, the Scheduled Castes and the Backward Classes... We must do all we can to bring them up to the general level...The strength of the chain is measured by the weakest link of it and so until every link is fully revitalised, we will not have a healthy body politic.'

In 2019, the Government of India introduced 10 per cent reservation in education and government jobs for economically weaker sections among upper castes. How is it different from the above quote? Discuss.

8.7 The Tribal Movements

Different tribal groups spread across the country may share common issues. But the distinctions between them are equally significant. Many of the tribal movements have been largely located in the so called 'tribal belt' in middle India, such as the Santhals, Hos, Oraons, Mundas in Chota Nagpur and the Santhal Parganas. The region constitutes the main part of what has come to be called Jharkhand. We will not be able to go into any detailed account of the different movements. We take Jharkhand as an example of a tribal movement with a history that goes back a hundred years. We also briefly touch on the specificity of the tribal movements in the North East but fail to deal comprehensively the many differences that exist between one tribal movement and another within the region.

Struggles of the tribals continue

Jharkhand

Jharkhand is one of the newly formed states of India, carved out of south Bihar in the year 2000. Behind the formation of this state lies more than a century of resistance. The social movement for Jharkhand had a charismatic leader in Birsa Munda, an *adivasi* who led a major uprising against the British. After

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his death, Birsa became an important icon of the movement. Stories and songs about him can be found all over Jharkhand. The memory of Birsa's struggle was also kept alive by writing. Christian missionaries working in south Bihar were responsible for spreading literacy in the area. Literate adivasis began to research and write about their history and myths. They documented and disseminated information about tribal customs and cultural practices. This helped create a unified ethnic consciousness and a shared identity as *Jharkhandis*.

Literate adivasis were also in a position to get government jobs so that, over time, a middle-class adivasi intellectual leadership emerged that formulated the demand for a separate state and lobbied for it in India and abroad. Within south Bihar, adivasis shared a common hatred of *dikus* – migrant traders and moneylenders who had settled in the area and grabbed its wealth, impoverishing the original residents. Most of the benefits from the mining and industrial projects in this mineral-rich region had gone to *dikus* even as adivasi lands had been alienated. Adivasi experiences of marginalisation and their sense of injustice were mobilised to create a shared Jharkhandi identity and inspire collective action that eventually led to the formation of a separate state.

The issues against which the leaders of the movement in Jharkand agitated were:

- acquisition of land for large irrigation projects and firing ranges;
- survey and settlement operations, which were held up, camps closed down, etc.
- collection of loans, rent and cooperative dues, which were resisted;
- nationalisation of forest produce which they boycotted

The North East

The process of state formation initiated by the Indian government following the attainment of independence generated disquieting trends in all the major hill districts in the region. Conscious of their distinct identity and traditional autonomy, the tribes were unsure of being incorporated within the administrative machinery of Assam.

> The rise of ethnicity in the region is thus a response to cope with the new situation which developed as a consequence of the tribe's contact with a powerful alien system. Long isolated from the Indian mainstream the tribes were able to maintain their own worldview and social and cultural institutions with little external influence. …While the earlier phase showed a tendency towards secessionism, this trend has been replaced by a search for autonomy within the framework of the Indian Constitution *(Nongbri 2003: 115).*

One of the key issues that bind tribal movements from different parts of the country is the alienation of tribals from forest lands. In this sense ecological issues are central to tribal movements. Just as cultural issues of identity and economic issues such as, inequality, are. This brings us back to the question about the blurring of old and new social movements in India.

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8.8 The Women's Movement

The 19th Century Social Reform Movements and Early Women's Organisations

You are already familiar with the 19th century social reform movements that raised various issues concerning women. Chapter 2 had dealt with it as did the earlier book. The early 20th century saw the growth of women's organisations at the national and the local level. The Women's India Association (WIA) (1917), All India Women's Conference (AIWC) (1926) and National Council for Women in India (NCWI) (1925) are ready names of organisations that we can mention. While many of them began with a limited focus, their scope extended over time. For instance, the AIWC began with the idea that 'women's welfare' and 'politics' were mutually exclusive. Few years later in one of the Presidential addresses it was stated, "...Can the Indian man or woman be free if India be a slave? How can we remain dumb about national freedom, the very basis of all great reforms?" (Chaudhuri 1993: 149)

In the North Cedar Hills, a woman named Gufiallo became famous for her part in the Civil Disobedience Movement.

It can be argued that this period of activity did not constitute a social movement. It can be argued otherwise too. Let us recall some of the features that characterise social movements. It did have organisations, ideology, leadership, a shared understanding and the aim of bringing about changes on a public issue. What they succeeded together was to create an atmosphere where the women's question could not be ignored.

Agrarian Struggles and Revolts

It is often assumed that only middle class educated women are involved in social movements. Part of the struggle has been to remember the forgotten history of women's participation. Women participated along with men in struggles and revolts originating in tribal and rural areas in the colonial period. The Tebhaga movement in Bengal, the Telangana arms struggle from the erstwhile Nizam's rule, and the Warli tribal's revolt against bondage in Maharashtra are some examples.

Post 1947

An issue that is often raised is that if there was an active women's movement before 1947, what happened afterwards? One explanation has been that many

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of the women activists who were also involved in the nationalist movement got involved in the nation building task. Others cite the trauma of Partition responsible for the lull.

In the mid–1970s, there was a renewal of the women's movement in India. Some call it the second phase of the Indian women's movement. While many of the concerns remained the same that there were changes both in terms of organisational strategy, as well as, ideologies.

Apart from organisational changes, there were new issues that were focussed upon. For instance, violence against women. Over the years, there have been numerous campaigns that have been taken up. You may have noticed that application for school forms have both father's and mother's names. This was not always true. Likewise, important legal changes have taken place thanks to the campaign by the women's movement. Issues of land rights, employment have been fought alongside rights against sexual harassment and dowry.

Struggle against dowry

Shahjehan Begum 'Ape' with a photograph of her daughter, allegedly murdered for dowry

There has been a recognition too that while all women are in some way disadvantaged *vis-a-vis* men, all women do not suffer the same level or kind of discrimination. The concerns of the educated middle class woman is different from the peasant woman, just as the concern of the Dalit woman is different from the 'upper caste' woman. Let us take the example of violence.

There has also been greater recognition that both men and women are constrained by the dominant gender identities. For instance, men in patriarchal societies feel they must be strong and successful. It is not, manly, to express oneself emotionally. A gender-just society would allow both men and women to be free. This of course rests on the idea that for true freedom to grow and develop, injustices of all kind have to end. The idea of gender-just society is based upon two important factors — educated women with multiple roles and improved sex ratio. The programme of the Government of India, *Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao Yojana* is an important effort in the actualisation of a gender-just society.

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Conclusion

As we reach the end of the book, it is perhaps relevant to go back to where we began in our first sociology book in Class XI. We had begun by discussing the dialectical relationship between the individual and the society. Social movements perhaps best show this relationship. They arise because individuals and social groups seek to change their conditions. Thereby, they change both themselves and the society.

Questions

1. Imagine a society where there has been no social movement. Discuss. You can also describe how you imagine such a society to be.
2. Write short notes on:
   - Women's Movement
   - Tribal Movements
3. In India it is difficult to make a clear distinction between the old and new social movements. Discuss.
4. Environmental movements often also contain economic and identity issues. Discuss.
5. Distinguish between peasant and New Farmer's movements.

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